DISSENT

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Work and Play in Industrial Society

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The Right to Be Lazy — HENRI RABASSIERE

Silone and the Radical Conscience — IRVING HOWE

British Labor Views the Future — STANLEY PLASTRIK

The Masses and the Elite — E. V. WALTER

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An Exchange on Freudianism — HERBERT MARCUSE and ERICH FROMM

WINTER 1956 — 75c

DISSENT

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The purpose of this magazine is suggested by its name: to dissent from the bleak atmosphere of conformism that pervades the political and intellectual life of the United States: to dissent from the support of the "status quo," now so noticeable on the part of many former radicals and socialists: to dissent from the terrible assumption that a new war is necessary or inevitable.

The accent of DISSENT will be radical. Its tradition will be the tradition of democratic socialism. We shall try to reassert the libertarian values of the socialist ideal, and at the same time, to discuss freely and honestly what in the socialist tradition remains alive and what needs to be discarded or modified. We are, it goes without saying, unalterably opposed to all forms of totalitarianism, both of the Fascist and the Stalinist varieties.

DISSENT is not and does not propose to become a political party or group. On the contrary, its existence is based on an awareness that in America today there is no significant socialist movement and that, in all likelihood, no such movement will appear in the immediate future.

DISSENT will not have any editorial position or statements. Each writer will speak for himself. Our magazine will be open to a wide range of opinion, though naturally our editorial emphasis will be such as to favor those contributions which help reestablish socialist thought and value. At the same time we shall welcome any expression of competent thought or scholarly contributions touching upon our area of interest, even if these dissent from DISSENT.

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DISSENT

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A QUARTERLY OF SOCIALIST OPINION

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THE ORDEAL OF HENRY J. . . .

A Collective Nightmare

On the morning of his scheduled hearing before the Security and Subversive Control Board of the government department in which he worked, Henry J. awoke with a start. His mouth felt dry.

He picked up the letter from the Chief of his Bureau. It announced his suspension, without pay, and was accompanied by the "interrogatories." Henry J. read this letter many times. In fact, only the night before he had again gone over it with his counsel in preparation for today's hearing. His eye ran over the list of charges he must disprove.*

The initial charge was concisely, if inelegantly, put:

> *"Specifically, it is charged that you continued sympathetic association with a known Communist, read Communist literature and made pro-Communist statements."*

After much prodding, Henry J's lawyer had obtained further specifications and charges. There were the direct political charges:

> "That about 1937-38 in or around ....., you actively participated in collecting funds for the purchase of an ambulance for the Loyalist Army in the Spanish Civil War."
> "You have expressed pro-Communist statements to at least two fellow employees."
> "You were reported to have 'belittled the capitalistic system,' to have propounded anti-capitalistic theories and to have read literature of a subversive nature."

This was followed by what might be called personal charges:

> "In 1950, Communist literature (unspecified) was observed in the book shelves and Communist art (Picasso, Matisse, Renoir) was seen on the walls of your residence in ....."
> "On numerous occasions you have made statements to the effect that people accuse other people of being Communists any time anything goes wrong..."
> "You have consistently embarrassed the [Agency] by not paying your debts promptly."
> "You had cohabited for some time with a woman who was not your wife."
> "You exhibited a hypercritical attitude towards society that appeared to reflect indoctrination."

continued on page 97

* All charges, questions, answers, etc., as well as all materials quoted are taken directly from *Case Studies in Personnel Security,* collected under the direction of Adam Yarmolinsky, August 1955, and published by The Bureau of National Affairs, Washington, D.C. with funds received from The Fund for the Republic.

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Journal of the Quarter

THE POLITICS OF "MODERATION"

The last three months of 1955 were marked by one dominant event: the collapse of the "Geneva spirit," at least until expediency requires its resurrection, and a return to the cold war with the position of the West considerably weakened. It is hardly an exaggeration to speak of a severe crisis in U.S. foreign policy. Here are a few indices:

- A considerable advantage recently won by the Communist Party in Indonesia's elections.
- The sudden and apparently deep penetration of Russian diplomacy in the Near East.
- The establishment, with consequences not yet measured, of diplomatic relations between the Adenauer regime and Russia.
- Tentative but significant reestablishment of cordial relations between Yugoslavia and Russia.
- A further deterioration of the U.S. position in Germany.
- The remarkably successful tour of Khrushchev and Bulganin in Asia, together with the even more remarkably obtuse statement of Secretary Dulles in support of Portuguese imperialism.
- The beginnings of an "economic aid" policy by the Russians with which they mean to compete against the U.S.—a policy that in Burma has already met with a certain success.

Writing in the *New York Times* (Nov. 15, 1955), James Reston puts the matter with his usual frankness; high administration sources are "seriously disturbed" because "events are running steadily against the administration's policy in Germany... [There is] a deterioration of U.S. influence in Southeast Asia and the Middle East," and it is felt by unnamed members of the Western bloc that the U.S. "has lost the gamble to arm and unite Germany within the North Atlantic Treaty alliance."

Nor is this simply a matter of discovering that such puerile slogans as "Massive Retaliation" and "Unleash Chiang Kai-shek" have been proved to be empty. What has collapsed is a foreign policy based on a failure to understand the dynamics of the modern world—a failure that has deep roots in class psychology, and not merely in individual obtuseness. (While we would be the first to agree that Dulles' statement on Goa was a piece of stupidity hardly paralleled in the Christian era, it should be added that it is the kind of stupidity that has its sources in an ingrained imperialistic outlook: Dulles finds it *natural* that Portugal should defend its "rights" in Goa, and can-

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not understand why India creates such a furor about a small strip of land. After all, the Portuguese constitution includes Goa as a province!)

The failure of U.S. policy to take into account the dynamics of the modern world—the fundamental though intermittent impulse to profound social change, the deep-rooted hostility felt by the whole Asian-African world toward the Western powers, the thirst shared by all the "underdeveloped" countries for a rapid industrialization as a prerequisite to improved living standards—this failure flows not merely from Republican parsimoniousness with foreign aid funds. Point Four, valuable as it may be, cannot be a substitute for a coherent political policy in regard to large areas of the world. And this failure in political imagination—of which U.S. support of Chiang Kai-shek, Syngman Rhee and their like is merely an outer *symptom,* too easily confused by certain liberals with the inner disease—is shared by Republicans and Democrats alike. Indeed, the remarkable admission by Dean Acheson in his recent book that the "excesses" of the Eisenhower administration in regard to civil liberties can be traced back to the policies of the Truman administration should be a prod to Truman's Secretary of the Interior to acknowledge that the failures of the Republican administration in foreign policy are intimately related to, even if also at times caricatures of, the course first taken by the Truman administration.

That Khrushchev and Bulganin are utterly demagogic in their Asian speechmaking, that their behavior in India constitutes a gross example of the very imperialist *interventionism* they repeatedly denounced, is obvious —and beside the point. What matters is that U.S. policy *in its long-range and fundamental aspects* is calculated to reinforce the appeal of their demagogy in Asia. And the increasing coalescence between the Republicans and Democrats—hailed by so many empty-heads as a sign of national "maturity"—does nothing whatever to reassure the Asians or the Africans that there is any reason to expect a serious improvement in U.S. policy. Mr. Allan Nevins, with a complacence not at all exceptional, writes (in the *New Leader,* Dec. 12, 1955) that "no matter who is elected, we shall continue to maintain in the domestic and, above all, the foreign field a set of policies which have remained *fairly identical* under Truman and Eisenhower." True enough; and disastrous!

So long as the United States continues to be regarded, in the eyes of the world, as a center of "restorationist" policies, as a center of conservatism and social inertia, the crisis in foreign policy will continue. Those who wonder about the "magic" of Russian foreign policy simply fail to understand that the one sure "secret weapon" of Russian policy is the predictable responses of the State Department. And so long as an intelligent writer like Joseph Harsch, the foreign expert of the *Christian Science Monitor,* can congratulate (November 3, 1955) Secretary Dulles for creating an alliance that reaches to Tito on the one hand and Franco on the other—this, Harsch feels, is proof that we are not taken in by *mere ideologies* —there is little to hope for from liberal criticism. But Khrushchev and Bulganin, who seem utterly unimpressed by the conclusion of the liberal intellectuals that "the age of ideology" is over, keep hammering away at their

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simple, demagogic but effective ideological themes; and that, together with a few economic carrots and a bit of military pressure, continues to win victories for them.

It is very possible, of course, that some resumption of the "Geneva spirit" may yet take place; and along these lines it is interesting to speculate on Joseph Harsch's theory (*CSM*, Nov. 19, 1955)—a very cynical theory —that the possibilities for a *détente* opened at Geneva were so extreme that both power blocs felt a need to withdraw into the more familiar postures of recalcitrance. But whatever may happen, the fundamental drift of things remains as before: Stalinism, stopped for a time in Europe, continues to register appalling victories almost everywhere else, and the Western powers, be it because of class rigidity or mere stupidity (and after a time, the difference is hard to make out), prove unable to cope with these victories.

Poverty Amidst Plenty. At home, the most important event of the quarter, though hardly noticed, was the announcement of the Joint Congressional Committee on the Economic Report that from 1948 to 1954 "the proportion of families with money income *under* $2,000 dropped from 25 percent to 20 percent, or in numbers, from 9,600,000 to 8,300,000. However, the value of the dollar dropped 12 percent in that period. Thus in terms of 1948 dollars the number of families in this category dropped only to 9,400,000..." (*NY Times*, Oct. 29, 1955). According to the Business Men's Council of the ADA, about 30,000,000 Americans, despite prosperity and full employment, lived "at or below poverty levels" in 1954.

Be it said to the credit of Arthur Schlesinger Jr. that he, almost alone among the liberals, has put the issue squarely: "What kind of prosperity is it when farm income drops persistently, when 22 per cent of all American families have incomes of less than $2,000, when prosperity itself is based on the greatest expansion of consumer credit in our history?" (*CSM*, Nov. 14, 1955)

Moderate Candidates. Were the above topics considered with a certain seriousness in the discussion of presidential candidates, a great deal of nonsense might be avoided. And especially nonsense about Adlai Stevenson, The Man with the Brooks Brothers Speech.

A barrage of publicity has accompanied Stevenson's candidacy. *The New Republic* has once more begun quoting everything Stevenson says. The New York *Post* has called upon Liberal Party members in New York State to drop this last feeble symbol of independent politics and register in the Democratic primaries, since the outcome of the putative battle between Stevenson and Harriman "can make political history." (Oct. 10, 1955).

But from a liberal point of view, even from an ordinary ADA point of view, why is Stevenson preferable to Harriman? Or to Kefauver? Can it be said that he is more liberal than they? Hardly so; since Stevenson himself does not try to deceive his ADA friends. Well aware that the winds blow soft these days, he calls himself a liberal-conservative (or is it conservative-liberal?). He praises "moderation" and when Secretary Dulles praises him for stressing "moderation," he praises Secretary Dulles. In other words, Stevenson understands that the best, or easiest, way to get

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the Democratic nomination is to present himself as *a Democratic equivalent of Ike*— more literate, more intelligent, but with policies that are essentially indistinguishable. (*Cf.* Allan Nevins above.) No wonder that, as Theodore White reports in *Colliers* of Oct. 27, 1955, "The alchemy of time has transformed several Dixie states from bitter Stevenson enemies to a potent bloc of support... In the new view, Stevenson seems much more palatable than Harriman, whom they think of as a Tammany-controlled radical..."

Very well; but if it isn't a matter of political standpoint, why should liberals still find in Stevenson an image of the hero? Because he so neatly typifies that mood of somewhat weary accommodation to things as they are, with a strand of aspiration toward a new manner of elegance, and a still present fondness for the rhetoric of elevated "responsibility"? But then Stevenson becomes little more than an Eisenhower for the professional classes.

Political scientists spend much of their time—they have recently been joined by sophisticated liberals, a kindly name for ex-radicals—in justifying the two-party system. They define it as a one-party system, which shows the cohesiveness of American society; a four-party system with each party so splendidly divided that undemocratic discipline cannot be forced upon it; and a six-party system in which both formal parties contain a left, right and center with the moderates coalescing to neutralize any form of extremism. (Of course, businessmen are generally more realistic than academicians, and there is more to be learned from the statement made by Louis Wolfson to the Montgomery Ward stockholders—*"I assure you that just as long as there is a Cold War the firm will prosper"* —than from cartons of textbooks on politics.)

But if we are blessed with such diversity of political organization, what meaning does it have at a time when the area of political choice keeps narrowing down? Consider the quite remarkable speech made by Gabriel Hauge, Administrative Assistant to President Eisenhower, in which he formally seals the pact between the not very liberal conservatives and the increasingly conservative liberals. Mr. Hauge tells us that the Eisenhower conservative is determined to preserve all the social legislation passed by the New Deal; that the Eisenhower conservative recognizes the need for "a larger role for government in many areas as economic interdependence and urban industrialized society have grown"; that he desires "a welfare society... without a welfare state." (*CSM*, Oct. 24, 1955).

And there we are. All the electoral rhetoric notwithstanding, the two parties keep drawing close to one another, the distinction between liberal and conservative becomes increasingly hard to preserve, and the endlessly publicized virtues of the two-four-six party system in the United States proves to be little more than a choice among "moderate" custodians of the war economy and our limping foreign policy. I. H.

DISSENT was going on the press when the French elections were held. In our next issue we will offer an analysis of the present state of French politics.

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BRITISH LABOR VIEWS THE FUTURE

Stanley Plastrik

A strange silence fell over the British Labor Party immediately after its electoral defeat. Even the flurry of mutual recrimination within the party leadership hardly lasted more than a few days. The annual party conference held in October of last year impressed observers more by its dullness than by anything else. Disunity remains, but a split has been avoided; disagreement continues, but the movement goes on.

The truth is that once the elections were over, the *real* issues before Britain's socialist movement made the former struggle of party groups seem irrelevant. Yesterday's issues were tactical or narrowly political while the new issues tend to replace old struggles and factions; they are problems of the movement *as a whole*. Perhaps for the first time in its history, the British Labor Party has been dragged out of its habitual provincialism, forced to take a look at its past and present and to search its very soul for the future.

These new problems are simple enough: Where do we go from here? Does our party have a future? Is our concept of socialism lacking, antiquated? What new relationships must be established between movement and party, doctrine and practice, means and ends? One of the striking things about this discussion* is that it turns upon much the same problems that are plaguing socialists everywhere, be they members of a powerful movement or simply scattered individuals. Much of the material so far presented gives the impression that this common recognition of the party's impasse has resulted in a common effort to think things over. There is much strength in such an approach.

I

In a particularly sober article (*Tribune,* June 2, 1955), Aneurin Bevan descended from the rhetorical clouds of his electoral militancy to make some telling observations:

> For the first time within living memory a Tory Government managed to exist for more than three years without inflicting mass unemployment on the country at the same time. A generation has grown up in Britain

* It may be found scattered throughout such publications as the *New Statesman and Nation, Tribune, Socialist Standard,* etc. Who knows but the Labor Party may before long have a theoretical review of its own!

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that has not experienced the frustration and privation of unemployment. The old keen edge of attack on capitalist society was therefore blunted. Youth does not build its case on the memory of the old. It has its own emotional attitude to contemporary society and this is not compounded of the elements that make up the mental climate of past generations.

Its fears cannot be evoked by possibilities that lie outside its own experience. Communal memories are overlaid by a new situation and their influence grows ever more remote and vague. Labor is essentially the custodian of those memories and they were not sufficient in themselves to form the basis of mass appeal.

Shortly after, G. D. H. Cole, in an article entitled "Thoughts After the Election" (*New Statesman and Nation,* June 25, 1955), probed still deeper into the heart of the question which, for him, concerned the future of socialism itself. Pointing both to the absolute and relative growth of intermediate social groups between the proletariat and capitalist class, Professor Cole goes on: "Workers are much better off and much more secure economically than they were in Marx's day." New techniques have made it possible to alleviate economic crises with the result that trade unions and socialist parties press for "further installments" of the "Welfare State," rather than the socialist program. This, in turn, weakens the socialist appeal to the proletariat, which is no longer a fundamental one built around principles and ideals. At the same time, it offers nothing to the "marginal, floating voters" which the Tory party does not offer.

> Thus socialism, far from being a necessary outcome of current economic trends, in practice turns counter to them both in the subjective sense that the will to fundamental change is weakened by success in improving conditions and opportunities under capitalism and in the objective sense that there is no necessary tendency for capitalism to break down under the stress of its inner contradictions.

Furthermore, says Cole, "by bidding against them," the socialist parties and the unions keep the capitalists "up to scratch"; capitalism becomes "tolerably progressive." Even electoral victories are not mandates for the introduction of socialism, but only for more "welfare." Under such circumstances, the Labor Party is doomed to "remain an opposition party."

Cole's conclusion from the vexing situation is his now familiar belief that the party is not enough. The ethical basis of socialism's appeal must be revived; specifically, Cole urges participation by socialist intellectuals in his rather nebulous "World Socialist Crusade." For "the appeal of socialism, unlike that of the Welfare State, is not to human selfishness but to the will to work together in a cause common to all mankind."

II

Soon enough, in the tradition of British practicality, the discussion assumed more concrete form. The pessimistic views of Cole

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are not shared by many English socialists. Perhaps no political party in history has ever had such deep-going roots, tapping such rich and varied sources, as does British Labor. The non-Marxian origins of British Labor are known to all of us and recent years have only emphasized the line of demarcation between English socialism and the continental varieties. In 1937 Attlee wrote:

> The British Labor Party is an expression of the socialist movement adapted to the British climate. It is also a political movement of the English people which is the heir of many others. . . . It is our national custom to look for precedents in the past for each step in advance that we take.

One of the great sources of British socialism is, of course, reform movements within the Established Church as well as the independent dissenting churches. Moral, ethical and religious questions—"problems of conscience"—have played a much greater part in British socialism than elsewhere. In 1945, for example, two-thirds of the Labor MP's in Parliament could correctly be described as Christian-Socialists, with the late Sir Stafford Cripps at their head.

What bearing has this on the practical consequences of the present discussion? It relates to the key issue for British labor: *the struggle for political, social and cultural equality.* Professor Tawney in his famous work *Equality,* which summed up the best in British thought on the subject, defined socialist equality as that state of affairs under which each individual could utilize all his faculties and capacities at their highest level. Whatever may be said about the weakening of socialist goals in Britain, this view remains unchanged. "The central socialist ideal is equality," writes Hugh Gaitskell in the *Socialist Standard,* publication of the Party's conservative wing. In an article attacking the notion that the nationalization of industry by itself acts as a bridge leading us from inequality toward equality, the ex-Chancellor* of the Exchequer and the almost sure-to-be future Party leader feels compelled to reassert this principal goal of social equality. At the Party conference in October he based his plea for future leadership upon this. The *Economist* (October 22, 1955) comments that Gaitskell's insistence upon equality of opportunity as the foundation of his socialist faith does not strongly differentiate him from "the Babeufs of the Labor Party."

More specifically, the editors of the *Socialist Standard* (June and July, 1955), who by and large constitute the brain center for the new conservative wing of the party now forming around Gaitskell, formulated the following key differences with present-day Toryism:

(1) Fairer shares of prosperity and income for the masses of people.

(2) A heavy taxing hand applied to capital gains and inheritance. (Gaitskell believes the inheritance of large fortunes constitutes a greater evil in terms of inequities than does what remains of private ownership.)

(3) Improving the social service system and the Welfare State.

(4) Development of extensive consumer protection.

* Gaitskell has since become party leader.

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(5) Establishment of a higher investment rate in industry in order to hasten its modernization.

These differences with Toryism really point up the character a new Labor government would take, assuming that Gaitskell and his supporters were in command. Writing in the same publication, Gaitskell expressed the view that the party doctrine of public ownership of industry, whose Fabian origins are familiar enough, now offers a "too simple" view of society. Rather than concentrating on enlarging the statified sphere of economy, we must pursue fiscal aims, he writes, whose goal is further levelling and equalizing. Thus, by attacking the inheritance of large fortunes, "we may also see the State gradually becoming a property-owner and shareholder over a much wider field" than that represented by its current ownership of certain key industries (coal, railroads, etc.)

Professor Arthur Lewis, an official right-wing party economist, presents similar views even more concisely:

> A Government machine in which all property and all opportunities of employment are concentrated is really a totalitarian rather than a Socialist conception.
>
> . . . An alternative would be to democratize property not by nationalizing it but by redistributing it. A society in which each person owned an equal amount of property would come much nearer the socialist ideal than one in which the Government owned all the property. It is possible to devise taxation, inheritance, and financial systems which break up property concentrations and redistribute property ownership.

We note, of course, the kinship of these views to Keynesian liberalism and their remoteness from revolutionary economic doctrine as practiced, let us say, in the earliest phase of the Russian Revolution. Yet, even such proposed extensions of leveling and redistributing meet fierce Tory resistance, except within the group of Tory "radicals" who wish to "humanize" the large corporations and introduce "democracy" into private ownership.

By a neat, if transparent, play on words Professor Lewis labels as the "real Party conservatives" those who cling to the old line (complete or almost complete nationalization of private enterprise):

> Some party members just keep on demanding the old mixture as if we were still back in the good old days of 1900... by and large it is the intellectuals of the party who refuse to think about its problems.

III

The Attlee government carried out a massive redistribution of income and earning capacity; but its redistribution of *wealth and ownership* was, by comparison, insignificant. If taxation, particularly the income tax, has now been pushed to its uttermost limits, as both Professor Lewis and Peter Shore, writing in the *New Statesman and Nation,* contend, then further equalization of social wealth and power must come about through other means. Here we find perhaps the great-

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est specific divergence of views. The Gaitskell-Lewis wing of the party favors a policy of "restraint" as concerns wage claims, property redistribution, etc., and it clearly opposes a capital levy on wealth at this time.

What then, demand the Bevanites and party radicals, *is* socialism? In response to the viewpoint outlined above, this wing of the party asks for an end to the habit of mild apology whenever nationalization of industry is discussed. "Automation, atomic energy, electronics, etc., strengthen the case for central planning and social ownership." Further, only revision of the tax system to strike still harder at inherited wealth, together with a capital levy organized by the state can advance us on the path of a further redistribution of wealth. All this is tied up with the advance toward a socialist society without which aim, Bevan writes in the *Tribune,* the Labor Party "... will have no significance in the future life of the nation."

This link seems to us to have been clarified in an editorial in the July, 1955, number of *Socialist Commentary,* organ of a small socialist group outside the Labor Party. It is worth quoting at length:

> If our only problem were "how to win elections," then the obvious answer would be to compete with the Conservatives in the race for personal and material satisfactions; indeed there is danger that that is precisely what we may be tempted into doing. But the question for socialists is not simply how to win elections, but how to win them for further socialist advance.
>
> The central, acknowledged socialist ideal is equality. "Fair shares" has been one of the best slogans used by the Labor Party since the war... Unfortunately it was tied up too much with rationing and subsidies. A broader and more radical content must now be given to this aim. To do so means facing the problem of property ownership, for the continued private ownership of large accumulations of property is undoubtedly the great barrier to ridding ourselves of the most objectionable inequalities which still remain in our society.
>
> . . . The evil is that large-scale ownership is so closely concentrated in the hands of a very few. Full employment and stiff income tax have narrowed the span of most incomes from work, and the majority are gradually tending to a common mode of life. Yet over and above them remains a class of people who are able to pursue an entirely other kind of existence, on the strength of their property holdings.
>
> ... The concentration of private property also gives rise to the inequalities of status in work. Property is a source of power as well as privilege. Industry today, it is often said, is in the hands of its managers, not its owners. This is a dangerous half-truth. The managers of private enterprise are ultimately accountable only to its owners. The workers are given only as much respect as trade unions may be able to enforce or as expediency may require. Professor Tawney's description—"autocracy tempered by insurgence"—still sums up the system which prevails within the greater part of industry.
>
> What would be done about the crucial problem of property ownership? The Tories are now promising that they will be the party to take

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action. They will build a "property-owning democracy" through a redistribution of property by means of co-partnership... A few big firms have set an example. But examine these schemes, and there is nothing of worth behind the façade... In no way do they give their employees the glimmerings of *equality of status* in the enterprise... The whole idea is a pious sham.

What is the socialist alternative?... Nationalization has been the traditional socialist position. But nationalization today seems to have little appeal, even to the working class. This is our dilemma. The true answer, however, is not to throw nationalization overboard, but to recognize that by itself it is not enough.

Nationalization with compensation cannot do much to redistribute property; other measures are required, and the proposals are there. A capital gains tax would go some way to prevent new accumulations of property; and reformed death duties would strike further at the inequalities which come from inheritance. But even these measures will at best take effect slowly.

Have socialists the courage to go further?

The only final solution is to transfer all the large accumulations of property into public ownership. This will mean a *capital levy*...

Nationalization, by itself, is also not enough to solve the problems of workers' status in industry. It is true that the transfer to the State of the ownership of enterprise gives society control over the appointment of managers and makes them accountable to the public. But this does not get us very far unless the very purposes of industry are changed. If all that is to count are efficiency and productivity, then the position of the workers will continue to be treated as of subsidiary importance. Nationalizations need to be combined with industrial democracy, and so far socialists have significantly failed in showing how this is to be done.

Equality is not, as is sometimes thought, the whole of socialism; that is too narrow a view. As soon as one tries to express equality in meaningful terms, other values enter. Equality does not mean uniformity or regimentation. It does not mean equal opportunities for each to scramble over the backs of others while pushing the weakest to the wall. It means equal opportunities for every person to make the most of his life without harming others, to develop his capacities in freedom, to share in some finer, more cooperative way of living. The aim, in other words, has been to combine equality with quality; to level up and not to level down. Seen in this way socialism has its appeal to every man of generous impulse. Its basic appeal is not to class, but to conscience and community.

. . . Equality with quality can only be won through increased public ownership, public enterprise and public expenditure. This must remain the crux of any socialist program. But none of these is an end in itself. They are means... Is there doubt that such a program will win votes? Unless we believe that it is possible for people actually to prefer—and vote for—a society based on socialist and not on capitalist values, then we cease to believe in this, our own message. That would be a final defeat, for there never will be socialism without socialists. (My emphasis —S. P.)

In a recent issue of the *New Leader,* Irving Kristol, reporting on the

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Margate conference, attempts to draw a line between the Socialist-Labor movement, with its "ideological trappings," and the Labor Party, whose goal is to administer the Welfare State. The cartoonist Vicky, in a sketch mocking this same conference, shows the aspirants for party leadership parading before the delegates in their "ideological bikinis." Yet how wrong both are! Between 1945 and 1951 the party headed the first post-war government to carry out a substantial portion of its program. This experience is now exhausted. A futher, infinitely more complex and difficult advance is now under preparation. That is the gist of the discussion which we have, in part, quoted. Is it not clear that the two basic wings of the party (conservatives and radicals) have much in common, no matter how serious their differences in approach may be? For, whatever may be the subjective-views of individual leaders, only a common, abiding faith in socialism itself can sustain the movement. There can be no playing with this. The original socialist objectives retain their full validity, but we now see they may be achieved by something other than the old formulas and methods. What this is to be is now under discussion. But almost all tendencies in the party agree that the continued existence of the present-sized capitalist sector in British society cannot be reconciled with any major progress toward equality.

Whatever happens within the party or in the struggle for succession to Attlee, these are essentials to keep in mind. British socialism is alive and thinking. Considering the rapid deflation of the Conservative government and the disenchantment with Anthony Eden, the occasion to prove this may arrive sooner than foreseen.

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THE WORLD AS PHANTOM AND AS MATRIX

Gunther Anders

I

Modern mass consumption is a sum of solo performances; each consumer, an unpaid homeworker employed in the production of the mass man.

In the days before the cultural faucets of radio and television had become standard equipment in each home, the Smiths and Millers used to throng the motion picture theaters where they collectively consumed the stereotyped mass products manufactured for them. One might be tempted to regard it as peculiarly appropriate that the mass product should be thus consumed by a compact mass. Such a view, however, would be mistaken. Nothing contradicts the essential purpose of mass production more completely than a situation in which a single specimen of a commodity is simultaneously enjoyed by several, let alone by numerous, consumers. Whether this consumption is a "genuine communal experience" or merely the sum of many individual experiences, is a matter of indifference to the mass producer. What he needs is not the compact mass as such, but a mass broken up or atomized into the largest possible number of customers; he does not want all of his customers to consume one and the same product, he wants all of his customers to buy identical products on the basis of an identical demand which has also to be produced.

In countless industries this ideal has more or less been achieved. Whether the motion picture industry can ever achieve it seems doubtful, because this industry continues the tradition of the theater: the commodity it produces is a spectacle designed for simultaneous consumption by a large number of spectators. Such a situation is obsolete. No wonder that the radio and television industries could enter into competition with the motion picture despite the latter's tremendous development: for the two newer industries benefited from the possibility of marketing, in addition to the commodity to be consumed, the

Note: This article is a slightly condensed version of the first of three articles on television which appeared in the distinguished German review, *Der Merkur*.

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devices required for its consumption, devices that, unlike the motion pictures, could be sold to almost everyone. And so it came about that many of the evenings the Smith and Millers had formerly spent together in motion picture theaters, they began to spend at home. The situation that is taken for granted in the motion picture theater—the consumption of the mass product by a mass of people—was thus done away with. Needless to say, this did not mean a slowing-up of mass production; rather, mass production for the mass man, indeed mass production of the mass man himself, was speeded up daily. Millions of listeners were served the identical product; each of these was treated as a mass man, "an indefinite article"; each was confirmed in his character—or absence of character—as a mass man. But with this difference, that collective consumption became superfluous through the mass production of receiving sets. The Smiths consumed the mass products *en famille* or even singly; the more isolated they became, the more profits they yielded. The mass-produced hermit came into being as a new human type, and now millions of them, cut off from each other, yet identical with each other, remain in the seclusion of their homes. Their purpose, however, is not to renounce the world, but to be sure they won't miss the slightest crumb of the world as image on a screen.

IT IS WELL KNOWN that the principle of industrial centralization, which ruled unchallenged only a generation ago, has now been dropped, mainly for strategic reasons, in favor of the principle of dispersal. It is less known that this principle of dispersal is also applied in the production of the mass man. Although we have so far spoken only of dispersed consumption, we are justified in speaking of production because in this case both coincide in a peculiar way. As the German proverb has it, *Mensch ist was er isst,* "man is what he eats" (in a nonmaterialistic sense): it is through the consumption of mass commodities that mass men are produced. This implies that the consumer of the mass commodity becomes, through his consumption, one of the workers contributing to his own transformation into a mass man. In other words, consumption and production coincide. If consumption is "dispersed," so is the production of the mass man. And this production takes place wherever consumption takes place—in front of each radio, in front of each television set.

Everyone is, so to speak, employed as a homeworker—a homeworker of a most unusual kind: for he performs his work—which consists in transforming himself into a mass man—through his consumption of the mass product offered him, i.e., through leisure. Whereas the classical homeworker manufactured his wares in order to secure a minimum of consumer goods and leisure, the modern homeworker consumes a maximum of leisure products in order to help produce the mass man.

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To complete the paradox, the homeworker, instead of receiving wages for his work, must pay for it by buying the means of production (the receiving sets and, in many countries, also the broadcasts) by the use of which he becomes transformed into mass man. In other words, he pays for selling himself: he must purchase the very unfreedom he himself helps to produce.

This conclusion may seem far-fetched. But no one will deny that for the production of the kind of mass man that is desired today, the formation of actual mass gatherings is no longer required. Le Bon's observations on the psychology of crowds have become obsolete, for each person's individuality can be erased and his rationality leveled down in his own home. The stage-managing of masses in the Hitler style has become superfluous: to transform a man into a nobody (and one who is proud of being a nobody) it is no longer necessary to drown him in the mass or to enlist him as an actual member of a mass organization. No method of depersonalizing man, of depriving him of his human powers, is more effective than one which seems to preserve the freedom of the person and the rights of individuality. And when the conditioning is carried out separately for each individual, in the solitude of his home, in millions of secluded homes, it is incomparably more successful. For this conditioning is disguised as "fun"; the victim is not told that he is asked to sacrifice anything; and since the procedure leaves him with the delusion of his privacy or at least of his private home, it remains perfectly discreet. The old saying "a man's own home is as precious as gold" has again become true, though in an entirely new sense. For today, the home is valuable not only to its owner, but also to the owners of the home-owners—the caterers of radio and television who serve the home-owner his daily fare.

II

Radio set and telescreen become transformed into a negative family table; the family into a miniature audience.

Needless to say, this mass consumption is not usually called by its true name. On the contrary, it is represented as favoring the rebirth of the family and of privacy—an understandable hypocrisy.

In actual fact, the type of mass consumption discussed here threatens to dissolve the family under the guise of fostering the intimacy of family life. For what now dominates in the home, thanks to television, is the outside world—real or fictional; and this outside world is so unrestrictedly dominant that the reality of the home—not only the four walls and furniture, but precisely the shared family life—becomes inoperative and phantom-like. When that which is remote becomes familiar, that which is familiar becomes remote. When the phantom becomes real,

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reality becomes a phantom. The home tends to become a container, its function to be reduced to containing a video screen for the outside world. The realm of the phantoms is victorious over the realm of the home, without even the chance of a contest between the two; it triumphs the moment the television set enters the home: it comes, it is seen, it conquers. At once the ceiling is full of leaks, the walls become transparent, the cement uniting the members of the family crumbles away, the shared privacy disintegrates.

Decades ago it was possible to observe that the social hallmark of the family—the massive table in the center of the living room, which served as the gathering point of the family—had begun to lose its force of attraction, had become obsolete. Eventually the living room table was eliminated from the modern home. Now it has found its authentic successor, the television set, a piece of furniture whose social symbolism and persuasive power can measure against those of the former table. This does not mean, however, that the television set has become the family center; on the contrary, what the set embodies is rather the decentralization of the family, its ex-centricity: it is, so to speak, the *negative* family table. It does not provide a common *center,* but rather a common avenue of escape. Whereas the table was a centripetal force; its existence encouraged the members of the family seated around it to continue weaving the cloth of family life as the shuttles of interest, glances and conversations ran back and forth. The influence exerted by the television screen is centrifugal. The seats in front of the screen are so arranged that the members of the family no longer face each other; they can see or look at each other only at the price of missing something on the screen; they converse (if they still can or want to talk with each other) only by accident. They are no longer together, they are merely placed one beside the other, as mere spectators. There can no longer be any question of a world formed or shared by them. The only thing the members of the family do together—though never as an integrated family group—is to take excursions into a realm of unreality, a world they actually share with no one (for they themselves do not really share in it); or if they do share it, it is only with all those millions of "soloists" of mass consumption who, like them and simultaneously with them, stare at their television screens. The family has been re-structured into a miniature audience, and the home into a miniature theater modeled on the movie house.

III

Because the receiving sets speak in our place, they gradually deprive us of the power of speech, thus transforming us into passive dependents.

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Television viewers, we have said, converse with each other only by accident—in so far as they still retain the will or the ability to speak.

This is true even of radio listeners. They too speak only by mistake. Their will and ability to speak decrease from day to day—and this does not mean that they become silent in the literal sense, but that their garrulousness has assumed a purely passive form. Since the receiving sets speak in our place, they progressively rob us of our ability to speak, of our opportunities for speaking, and finally even of our pleasure in expressing ourselves, just as the phonograph and radio have robbed us of live music performed in our homes.

The pairs of lovers sauntering along the shores of the Hudson, the Thames or the Danube with a portable radio do not talk to each other but listen to a third person—the public, usually anonymous, voice of the program which they walk like a dog, or, more accurately, which walks them like a pair of dogs. Since they are an audience in miniature which follows the voice of the broadcast, they take their walk not alone, but in company of a third person. Intimate conversation is eliminated in advance; and whatever intimate contacts take place between the lovers are introduced and even stimulated not by them, but by that third party —the husky or crowing voice of the program which (for is that not the very meaning of "program"?) tells both lovers what and how to feel or do. Since they do what they are told to do in the presence of a third party, they do it in an acoustically indiscreet situation. However entertaining their obedience may seem to the lovers, it is certain that they do not entertain *each other;* rather both are entertained by that third party which alone has a voice; and this voice does not entertain them only in the sense of keeping them occupied and diverting them, but also in the sense of providing them with support: as the third party in the alliance, this voice gives them that support which they, in their ignorance of what they can do with themselves, cannot give each other. Indeed, there is no reason to throw the cloak of silence over the fact that today even love-making often takes place to the accompaniment of the radio. The radio set that is admitted or desired in every possible situation is reminiscent of the torch-bearing female guide whom the ancients tolerated or invited as witness to their amorous pleasures; the difference between the two consists in this, that the modern guide is a mechanized public utility, that her torch serves to provide not only illumination but also warmth, and that under no circumstances must she keep her mouth shut, but on the contrary, is expected to talk her head off; she has to supply a background of noise in the form of songs or words and to silence that *horror vacui* which does not loosen its grip on the pair of lovers even *in actu.*

But the situation of love-making is only an example, the most

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blatant. People keep themselves similarly "entertained" in every situation, even while they work; and if by some mistake they talk to each other, the radio voice speaks in the background as the main protagonist, giving them the comforting and reassuring feeling that it will continue to speak even after they themselves have had their say—even after they are dead.

For them words are no longer something one speaks, but something one merely hears; speaking is no longer something that one does, but something that one receives. No matter in what cultural or political milieu this development toward an existence without speech takes places, its end result must be everywhere the same—a type of man who, because he no longer speaks himself, has nothing more to say; and who, because he only listens, will do no more than listen. The initial effects of this development are manifest even today: the languages of all advanced countries have become cruder, poorer; and there is a growing disinclination to use language. But that is not all: human experience, and hence man himself, also becomes progressively cruder and poorer. For man's inward life, its richness and subtlety, cannot endure without the richness and subtlety of language; man not only expresses himself through his speech, he is also the product of his language.

IV

We see the world only when we are inside our homes. The events come to us, not we to them.

The consumer goods by means of which such a transformation of human nature is achieved are brought into our homes, just as is gas or electricity. The deliveries are not confined to artistic products, such as music or radio dramas; they also include actual events, at least those events which are selected and processed to represent "reality" or to serve as substitutes for it. A man who wants to be "in the swim," to know what is going on outside, must go to his home, where the events are waiting for him, like water ready to flow from the faucet. For if he stayed outside, in the chaos of reality, how could he pick out anything "real" of more than local significance? Only after he has closed the door behind him, does the outside world becomes visible to him; only after we have been transformed into windowless monads, does the universe reflect itself in us.

This brings us to the heart of our subject. For the fact that the events of the day—the events themselves, not reports of events—that football matches, church services, atomic explosions, *visit us at home;* that the mountain comes to the prophet, the world to man, that fact, next to the mass production of hermits and the transformation of the family into a miniature audience, is the revolutionary change brought about by radio and television.

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The truly philosophic implications of this change will become apparent from the following tentative list of some of its consequences:

1. When the world comes to us, instead of our going to it, we are no longer "in the world," but only listless, passive consumers of the world.

2. Since the world comes to us only as an image, it is half-present and half-absent, in other words, phantom-like; and we too are like phantoms.

3. When the world speaks to us, without our being able to speak to it, we are deprived of speech, and hence condemned to be unfree.

4. When the world is perceivable, but no more than that, i.e., not subject to our action, we are transformed into eavesdroppers and Peeping Toms.

5. When an event that occurs at a definite place is broadcast, and when it can be made to appear at any other place as a "broadcast," it becomes a movable, indeed, almost ubiquitous object, and has forfeited its spatial location, its *principium individuationis.*

6. When the event is no longer attached to a specific location and can be reproduced virtually any number of times, it acquires the characteristics of an assembly-line product; and when we pay for having it delivered to our homes, it is a commodity.

7. When the actual event is socially important only in its reproduced form, i.e., as a spectacle, the difference between being and appearance, between reality and image of reality, is abolished.

8. When the event in its reproduced form is socially more important than the original event, this original must be shaped with a view to being reproduced: in other words, the event becomes merely a master matrix, or a mold for casting its own reproductions.

9. When the dominant experience of the world thrives on such assembly-line products, the concept "the world" is abolished in so far as it denotes that *in which* we live. The real world is forfeited; the broadcasts, in other words, further an idealistic orientation.

V

Because the world is brought into our homes, we do not have to explore it; as a result, we do not acquire experience. Modern man travels only as a last resort.

In a world that comes to man, man has no need to go to the world in order to explore or experience it; that which was once called "experience" has become superfluous.

Up until recently, expressions such as "to go into the world," or "to experience" have denoted important anthropological concepts. Since man is being relatively little endowed with instincts, he has been compelled to experience and know the world *a posteriori* in order to find his place in it; only in this way could he reach his goal and become "experienced." Life used to consist in a voyage of exploration; that is why the great *Erziehungsromane* ("educational novels") dealt with the ways man—although always in the world—had to travel in order to

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get to know the world. Today, because the world comes to him—as an image—he need not bother to explore it; such explorations and experiences are superfluous, and since all superfluous functions become atrophied, he can no longer engage in explorations and become experienced. It is indeed evident that the type of "experienced man" is becoming increasingly rare, and that age and experience tend to be regarded as less and less valuable. Like pedestrians who have taken to flying we no longer need roads; in consequence, our knowledge of the ways of the world, which we formerly used to explore, and which made us experienced, is declining. Simultaneously with this, the world itself becomes a pathless wilderness. Whereas formerly we stored up experience by means of traveling, today the world is "stored up" for us like a commodity put aside for future use; we do not have to go to the events, the events are paraded before us.

Such a portrait of our contemporaries may at first sight appear distorted. For it has become customary to look upon the automobile and the airplane as symbols of modern man, a being whose essence is travel. What is in question is precisely the correctness of this definition. For modern man does not attach value to his traveling because of any interest in the regions he visits, actually or vicariously; he does not travel to become experienced but to still his hunger for omnipresence and for rapid change as such. Moreover, the speed of his movement deprives him of the opportunity for experience (to the extent that speed itself has now become his sole and ultimate experience)—not to mention the fact that the number of objects worthy of being experienced and capable of adding to his experience is continually decreased by his successful efforts to make the world uniform, and that even today he feels at home, in need of no experience, wherever he may land. A publicity poster of a well-known airline, utterly confusing provincialism and globalism, appeals to its customers with these words: "When you use our services, you are everywhere at home." Everywhere at home: there is indeed good reason to assume that today any trip (even though the man who takes it may sleep comfortably in his electrically heated cabin while flying over the North Pole) is felt to be an antiquated, uncomfortable and inadequate method of achieving omnipresence. Modern man still resorts to this method precisely because, despite all his efforts, he has not yet succeeded in having everything delivered to his home—something he has come to regard as his inherent right.

Such a situation points to a mode of existence, a relation to the world so extraordinarily perverse that even Descartes' malicious demon would be incapable of devising a comparable deception. Such a mode of existence may be described as "idealistic" in two ways:

1. Although we actually live in an alienated world, this world is

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presented to us in such a manner that it seems to exist for us, as though it were our own and like ourselves.

2. We "take" (i.e., regard and accept) it as such, although we stay at home in our chairs. We do not actually "take" it, in the manner of a devouring beast or a conqueror, and we do not actually make it our own; but the average radio listener or television viewer looks upon the world that is served him in the form of reproduced sounds and pictures as his own. As a result he develops into a kind of Peeping Tom ruling over a phantom world.

VI

The world brought into our homes by radio and television is a debased, philistinized world; pseudo-familiarity is an aspect of alienation.

This is not the place to discuss the origin and symptomatology of alienation. The literature of the subject is enormous, and we must take this phenomenon for granted. The particular deception in question here consists in this, that the radio listener or television viewer, although living in an alienated world, is made to believe that he is on a footing of the greatest intimacy with everything and everybody. He is not invited to become acquainted with an unfamiliar world; instead, people, countries, situations, events, particularly the least familiar of them, are presented to him as though he had always known them; they are thoroughly philistinized in advance.

Whereas our next-door neighbors usually do not know us, and the distance between them and us remains unbridged for years on end, film stars, girls whom we never meet personally but whom we have seen countless times and whose spiritual and physical characteristics are known to us more completely than those of our co-workers, appear to us in the guise of old friends, of "chums." We are automatically on a footing of intimacy, we refer to them by their first names.

To bring about such a state of affairs, to enable the program consumer to treat the world as something familiar, the televised image must address him as an old chum. In fact, every broadcast has this chummy quality. When I tune in on the President, he suddenly sits next to me at the fireplace, chatting with me, although he may be thousands of miles away. (I am only marginally aware of the fact that this intimacy exists in millions of copies). When the girl announcer appears on the screen, she speaks to me in a tone of complete frankness, as though I were her bosom friend. (That she is also the bosom friend of all men is again only a marginal realization.)

All of them come to me as intimate or indiscreet visitors, all of them find me ready to be chummy with them. Not one of these people

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who are transported into my house retains even an atom of unfamiliarity. And this is true not only of persons, but of everything else, of the world as a whole. Things, places, events, situations—everything reaches us with a chummy smile on its lips. We have now achieved a footing of intimacy not only with film stars but also with the stars of the firmament; we speak of "good old Cassiopeia" just as readily as of Marilyn or Rita. And this is not meant as a joke. The fact that laymen and scientists regard it as possible and even probable that the inhabitants of other planets who allegedly operate the flying saucers have, like us and precisely in our time, no other worry but to undertake interplanetary voyages, proves that we look upon everything in the universe as "one of our sort." This is a sign of an anthropomorphism against which the anthropomorphism of so-called primitive civilizations strikes one as timid. The purveyors of the vulgarized universe realize that unless they bring nature down to our level they will not sell it—which would be to miss a profitable opportunity. But we, the consumers, are systematically transformed into boon companions of everything on our planet and in the universe—no more than boon companions, for of course there can be no question of genuine fraternization or identification.

What we have said of things and persons distant in space, also applies to things and persons distant in time. The past too is philistinized. I shall not speak of the historical motion pictures in which such a treatment is the rule. But even in a serious, vividly written American academic book, Socrates is described as "quite a guy"—in other words he is put in a category that brings the distant great man seemingly close to the reader; for, needless to say, the reader too is "quite a guy." This label gives the reader the unconsciously gratifying feeling that Socrates, if he had not happened to live in that remote past, would be essentially like us, would not have anything to say that is essentially different from what we have to say, and in no case could claim greater authority than we do.

Others perceive historical figures as comical by definition (e.g., their reactions to historical films); this is so because such figures strike them as provincials in the realm of time, as creatures that have not grown up in the capital—the Now—and for that reason behave like village idiots of history or superstitious backwoodsmen; every electrical invention made since their time is looked upon as an eloquent proof of their inferiority. Finally, to many of our contemporaries historical figures appear as nonconformists, as suspiciously queer fellows, for it is obvious that they regard themselves as something quite special—namely, unlike every decent man who chooses to live in the present, they prefer to take up residence in a cavern of the past. (This is the source of comic effects in several pieces by Mark Twain). But whether a great man of

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the past is regarded as "quite a guy," a queer fellow, or a provincial, these categories denote proximity, and hence are variations of the chum.

As for the typical case of "Socrates, the guy," the epithet here is obviously based on the great political principle formulated in the Declaration of the Rights of Man, "All men are born equal," which has now been extended into the assertion of the equality of all citizens of the commonwealth of times past and present. Needless to say, such an extension of the principle of equality suggests not only a false historical proximity, but also a misconception of the common denominator of all mankind—for after all the essence of Socrates consists in the very thing that "our sort" is lacking. The method allegedly intended to bring the object close to us, actually serves to veil the object, to alienate it, or simply to do away with it altogether. For once you project history on a single plane of boon companionship, it has actually ceased to exist *qua* history—and this is perhaps even more plausible than our general thesis, that when all the various and variously distant regions of the world are brought equally close to us, the world as such vanishes.

Translated from the German by NORBERT GUTERMAN

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ATTITUDES TO MASS CULTURE

Bernard Rosenberg

Morris Raphael Cohen, an extraordinarily gifted teacher, was best known as a critic of other philosophers. People would sometimes grumble about his "negativism": Cohen tore down systems of philosophy without offering a clear alternative. On one such occasion he is said to have answered this complaint as follows: "My first name is an Anglicization from the Hebrew for Moses, and like Moses, I can lead you through the wilderness without bringing you to the Promised Land." Students of "mass culture," whose subject matter is not the universe but only an increasingly significant part of it, should feel much as Cohen felt when he found himself unable to give sweeping answers to every question. Mass culture is not only a wilderness—with oases here and there—it is a largely uncharted one.

Moreover, at the end there may be no Promised Land. At present one can merely have hunches, and of these there is a plethora. Possibly the menace is greater than anyone supposed a few years ago. (I think it is.) Both academicians and detached intellectuals are finding it increasingly necessary to ask themselves whether the quality of American life has not been decisively altered by mass circulation magazines, comic books, detective fiction, movies, radio and television.

Geoffrey Wagner, an English writer and Fellow at Columbia University, is the latest to try an impressionistic interpretation of the popular arts.* Wagner deals serially with movies, comics, pin-ups, and TV, and makes marginal comments about other media. On a descriptive level, as "raw" material, his data are highly interesting. The author has a sharp eye for ripples on the tidal wave that is engulfing civilization. For instance, he notes the appearance of a new androgynous comic type parading in aprons and skirts. Dwight MacDonald has already commented on age and class homogenization as a characteristic of mass culture; since it also tends to femininize men and masculinize women, sexual homogenization may be added to the list. Mass culture is governed by a mania for simplification, which is ultimately expressed by an act like one to which Wagner alludes: elimination of the word "saga" from a famous title, *The Forsyte Saga,* as being too hard for the masses to understand.

Here and there Wagner displays a nice sense of irony. Having guided us through the comic books' chamber of horrors with its strangulations, flagellations and decapitations, Wagner observes that while "the above booklets

* *Parade of Pleasure. A Study of Popular Iconography in the USA,* by Geoffrey Wagner. Library Publishers. 192 pp. $6.00.

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were selling like hot-cakes off the newsstands and in the drugstores of the USA, *The Pocket Book of (Art) Masters* was seized as obscene in Dubuque, Iowa."

The study has other merits. It stresses not only the heavy tonnage of sub-art dumped on the American consumer, but also what happens to real art when it gets massified. Wagner cites the fate of George Orwell's wonderful novel *Burmese Days,* which in the reprint edition is subtitled "A Saga (the word is permissible in a subtitle but may account for the poor sales that followed) of Jungle Hate and Lust." There is more to this story than Wagner tells. Inspect the pocketbook cover and you will see a nude native woman with Rubensian breasts; in the text Orwell is at pains to indicate how flat-chested Burmese women are, so much so that Westerners often mistake them for boys!

WAGNER'S FRESHEST CHAPTER is on the girlie magazines which proliferate so fast that even a full-time voyeur couldn't keep up with all of them: *Night and Day, Scope, Pic, Eve, See, Glance, Cover Girls, Paris Models, Whirl, Laff, Keyhole, Zip, Wham, Stag, Brief, Bare, Vue, Eye, Eyeful, Wink, Flirt, Titter, Rave.* Since Wagner went to print a new genre has appeared which dwells upon lesbians dressed in riding attire, with spurs and whips, sadistically flogging their victims. Yet none of this strikes such terror in the heart as an ad Wagner says *US Camera* has carried for the past few years side by side with foto offers of bosomy beauties. This one entices the reader to buy *sets of German atrocity pictures.* They come cheap, thirty for two dollars. A deep if not direct connection exists between this kind of monstrousness and the comic strip which anounces, in Wagner's words: "So Chop-Chop exclaims as he wrenches off a commie's head in a *Blackhawk* book, 'Me study wrestling from television set.'"

Such are the facts which Wagner approaches with a most peculiar ambivalence. He wishes to damn mass culture in America while confessing to his "absolute *engouement* with the American people and all they connote and do . . ."

"It seems to me almost undeniable that America is the greatest country in the history of the world." These repeated attestations strike a vulgar note, and not the only one. Wagner admits that his work is derivative, in fact that it is a popularization of the critics of popular culture. His advice is to read the books of Gilbert Seldes, Herbert Marshall McLuhan, and Gershon Legman in preference to his. "Why? Because they are very much better, that's why." Then again, "These men have subtle minds and they wax a shade polysyllabic for my taste. But things tend to get wrapped up in polysyllables in our avant-garde journals and if there is one thing I can swear to with my hand on my heart, that is that I am not an avant-garde writer."

But the truth is that Wagner is less perceptive in reading his betters than in reading comic books. He finds the other men "not entirely optimistic," which, if it is not an extreme form of understatement, must be obtuseness, since he quotes a typical passage from McLuhan two lines later, "The misleading effect of books like George Orwell's *1984* is to project into the future a state of affairs that already exists."

The point need not be labored. Wagner has not considered the implications of his grisly parade. He can

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therefore attune himself to the familiar "upbeat" of most middle-brow writers. America, it turns out, will remain flexible and free because, unlike Germany, this country does not have a deep psychological love of the machine—whatever that mystical affirmation may mean. And, "As the level of general education in America rises, as it is rising annually, as things get done, as they eventually get done, so the position of the plutocrats of popular culture will become more and more insecure." That the level of general education has been rising and that things have got done simultaneously with the growth of a collective hypnosis (there will be 50,000,000 TV sets in American homes for the next Presidential campaign) does not dismay this iconographer.

WAGNER DECLARES that he has no politics, and that may explain why he has no frame of reference. Politics is a fairly reliable index to the differential assessment of mass culture. The political lines that have crystallized are approximately these: radicals (Dwight MacDonald, Irving Howe) who, like the arch conservatives (Ortega y Gasset, T. S. Eliot) although for opposite reasons, are repelled by what they commonly regard as tawdry and exploitative, whereas the liberals (David Riesman, Gilbert Seldes) take a predictable position in the middle.

Still more fundamental is the attitude toward Toynbee's Great West Wind, i.e., machine civilization, which blows with cyclonic force over the whole world. Today more than ever political stances and cultural choices are part of a much larger *gestalt* symbolized by the relentless advance of modern technology. In none of the archeological ages has human society been so revolutionary as at present. Man since his origin has had to struggle for the means of subsistence, like every other beast and like the post-graduate ape he was. Only now, with mechanized agriculture, artificial photosynthesis, the consumption of algae and other sea food, can we speak of a well-fed population much larger than ours. That everyone could enjoy an adequate diet and expend relatively little effort to secure it would have been unimaginable in any earlier age. Utopians used to speculate about who, in their good society, would do the dirty work. If we should chance to survive atomic radiation, the answer in a few decades may be, "Nobody."

What visionary ever dreamed that the Adamic curse could really be lifted from man? It very nearly has been. Frank Lloyd Wright may be correct when he predicts the paralysis of all our limbs except the pushbutton finger from whose sweat we may continue to live.

The adoption of this perspective is an essential first step in coming to grips with mass culture. No effort to comprehend and evaluate it can start anywhere else. From such a standpoint we may clear the air of a few erroneous assumptions:

1. *Capitalism is responsible for mass culture.* Not at all. It flourishes wherever the appropriate technological apparatus emerges, whether slowly or suddenly, and nowhere more so than in Soviet Russia which institutionalizes kitsch;

2. *America is responsible for mass culture.* Hardly, and for the same reasons;

3. *Democracy is responsible for mass culture.* Tocqueville was perhaps the first to make this persistent mistake,

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one shared by democrats who thought that vulgarity through leveling was the price that had to be paid for an otherwise beneficial system, and anti-democrats who thought the price too high.

IF ONE CAN HAZARD a single positive formulation, it would be that modern technology is the necessary and sufficient cause of mass culture. This is the new universal culture described by Clement Greenberg in his pioneer essay on avant-garde and kitsch, a culture which connects the East African who leaps out of his stone age hut into the movie house, with residents of Hong Kong, Berlin, Bogota, and New York. Neither national character nor the economic arrangement nor the political system has any final bearing on this question. All that really matters is the most recent industrial revolution which will soon be superseded by the next one.

The tentative technological determinism implicit in this formulation may be valid only for the present. *Today,* wherever modern tools are introduced and superimposed upon any culture, the mixture seems to be deadly. Differences between backward and advanced countries become attenuated. They meet at the same low level. Maybe at a higher stage of development society will be "ready" for industrialization, with consequences very different from those we see all around us in the here-and-now. Meanwhile, change, followed by barbarous accommodation, proceeds at an accelerated tempo.

No sooner do we assimilate a fragment of the change than it leads to another innovation whose significance is likewise imponderable. No IBM machine, nor yet a Univac, will tell us whether the latest development is for good or ill. Ambiguity is its key characteristic. If men are finally freed from manual labor and from the struggle with nature, what will they do? Cultivate their minds? Develop their sensibilities? Deepen and broaden themselves? Perhaps. When our physical environment has been subdued we may become hypersentient beings. Drudgery, monotony, inanition and brutishness can then be dispelled along with the animal existence we used to lead.

That such a step in human evolution could take place is what makes the greater likelihood so much more tragic. For even before man can transcend himself he is being dehumanized. Before he can improve his mind it is being deadened. The rich and varied life he might lead is standardized and devitalized. This breeds anxiety, and the vicious circle begins anew, for as we are objects of manipulation, our anxiety is exploitable. The mass grows: we are more alike than ever; and feel a deeper sense of entrapment and loneliness. Even if the incubus of hydrogen war could be removed, these specters would still hover over us.

The post-modern world offers man everything or nothing. There is no guide. It is enough that he *know* his wilderness. But any rational consideration of the probabilities leads to a fear that he will be overtaken by the mechanical furies that already beset him.

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LIFE IN THE FACTORY

Andrieux and Lignon

The abolition of capitalism alone will not insure the future of civilization. The character of modern industrial labor—repetitive, monotonous, segmented, cut off from directed thought—considerably modifies the problem of socialism. Those who would speak seriously of a socialism which will respect the human person must henceforth go beyond the goal of liberating the workers from capitalism. They must consider ways to protect the worker from the effects which his work has upon him.

So concludes Georges Friedman, veteran socialist and author of several studies on humanism and work.[1] Analogous ideas are current in American socialist thought of recent years. In *White Collar,* C. Wright Mills describes the Marxist ideal as the creation of a society in which the worker will no longer be alienated from his work. For Marx, Mills writes, this ideal would be realized with the abolition of capitalism. But is not this alienation from work a general condition whose causes are other than that of the worker's subordination to capital alone? Mills concludes that Marx is "guilty" of having written a hundred years ago and that his ideas, although still valuable as points of departure, are no longer adequate for grasping the essence of our modern dilemma. It follows likewise that Marxism is no longer able to envision a radically restructured future.[2]

Recognizing the need to rethink these problems, Mills attempts a definition of the essential evil involved in work for the modern worker. He focuses the problem on the separation of work from life and states the need for conceiving a new mode of life and work.[3]

Both Friedman and Mills agree that the abolition of capitalism alone will not solve the problem of work. Is this due to the new technical developments in modern work as distinct from the economic and social structure in which it takes place? Is the human problem involved that of compensating the worker for the loss of interest and human value in modern work? We do not believe so, but hold that the essence of the problem lies outside contemporary technological developments.

I

There is a significant difference between responsible completion of skilled work and the execution of routine mechanical tasks.

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The latter holds no interest for the worker, makes no demands on his intelligence. The true craftsman, by contrast, is permitted a certain initiative, the exercise of personal responsibility and the use of his mental powers. Unlike the machine tender, the craftsman can find a source of satisfaction in overcoming obstacles encountered, in mastering his material. The machine tender, on the other hand, reaps little from his years of labor other than premature old age, fatigue, general deterioration. The work life of the craftsman, however, is productive of permanent values: self-assurance, consciousness and, sometimes, status.

The craftsman's long working experience results in an increasingly better understanding of his craft—but will he have learned through his work to understand society, men and the world any better? Does work, even professional work, enable the worker to understand and gain perspective towards his general human condition, a condition broadly determined and not to be grasped by mere knowledge of the often narrow confines of daily life?

We live in a world where all that is available to man has not only undergone material transformation through human effort, but has been penetrated by significant interpretation. To comprehend and to orient oneself towards the significant and historical world need not presuppose a knowledge of all its details nor a grasp of all its sciences. What is needed is a good measure of knowledge appropriate for one's times: acquisition of a certain way of confronting reality spiritually, a way of penetrating reality not by the senses alone, but by the mental faculties. It is obvious that this way of seeing and thinking is not acquired in just any kind of activity—one's job furnishes neither the occasion nor the indispensable knowledge. It has never been otherwise, and it is not just overnight that the failure of work in this respect has become pronounced. As humanity advances, as techniques develop, and as intellectual culture becomes increasingly complex, the segment of reality available to the worker shrinks. Lacking orientation and autonomy, he is forced to lead an absurd existence at the fringes of civilization.*

Almost a half century ago Maurice Halbwachs, in his doctoral thesis on standards of living and the working class, vaguely foresaw the worker's divorce from the centers of societal existence and, in particular, from cultural life.[4] No inner reorganization of work can or will alter this situation either for the crafts or for the petty, repetitive chores of industrial work. One fact is certain: some forms of work provide opportunities for broadening one's horizons, others do not. Manual labor is among the latter.

The most elementary conception of justice, as well as interest in a renaissance of civilization, demands that an end be put to such a state of affairs. How? By shortening the work day? Less tired and with more leisure, would not the worker then be in a position to acquaint himself

* The worker is, of course, not alone in living as a stranger in his world and our remarks may be extended to other social strata. For some elements of society the problem of alienation, although not unaffected by specialization, will demand a somewhat different solution than the one here set forth.

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with contemporary intellectual culture, to assimilate the knowledge necessary for an understanding of the problems of his times and for active participation in decision making? A shorter work day is doubtless indispensable but will not suffice for the solution of our problem. Those who believe it sufficient fail to recognize the complexity of the problem. They overlook an essential effect of work on the totality of the workingman's existence.

II

Labor, vital though it is for society, is among those activities which carry little or no status. It places the worker on the lower rungs of the social ladder. What is most painful in the psychic life of the worker, even if he does not or cannot put it in these words, is that it is his very occupation which causes him to be devalued. And he *is* devalued. Trying to make the worker believe he is not held in disrepute is, as Henri de Man has written, like "trying to remove from Negroes their feeling of racial inferiority by attempting to demonstrate to them, by a shower of pamphlets, that their skin is white! In any case, social reality offers to the Negro [the proletarian] mirrors enough in which he can recognize his color."[5] Nothing has fundamentally changed here since Henri de Man wrote a quarter century ago. The Negro himself, when he has been emancipated, fears nothing so much as slipping down to the workingman's status.

Camara Laye, author of the recent autobiography *Black Child,* has given us fresh evidence of this. When Laye decided to leave his paternal hut in Upper Guinea to become integrated in the metropolitan life of France, he did not think he would be scorned because of his color, but he was afraid he would be looked down upon if he joined the working class: "I don't want to be a worker . . . I don't want to be scorned."[6] The worker is aware of and suffers from this disrespect. His behavior generally, and his use of leisure time in particular, are affected. He will not devote his time to acquiring a broad intellectual culture. For were he to do so, would he thereby alter his devalued status? An increase of literary, artistic or scientific knowledge would not change his social status. He would continue to belong to that enormous mass whose every particle, taken by itself, is without importance. He would not grow in esteem. For although esteem is attached only to activities of social significance, not all such activities are productive of esteem. And esteem is something other than that "good reputation" which is open to the worker.

Thus the great majority of workers take but the slightest interest, if any, in "higher" leisure-time pursuits. Such pursuits appear to have no connection with everyday reality, no social relevance or repercussion. Why expend effort and submit to intellectual discipline when it is more pleasant to see a football game, to go bowling, to listen to the radio, to take in a movie, if not to go fishing and enjoy the calmness of nature, or to cultivate a patch of garden, following the progress of flowers and peas one has himself planted? Relaxation and sports, so

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good in themselves, deteriorate in meaning and envelop the whole domain of leisure. *Absorbed by distractions, the worker lives oblivious of that which really concerns him.* The need to understand one's total situation, so profoundly anchored in the human being, is corrupted into the idle curiosity of a man "well-rooted in the neighborhood."

Thus it is clear that the mere extension of leisure time cannot remedy the devaluating effect of work on the worker's existence. There are those who will object that a good number of workers do use their free time in educating themselves and in cultivating their minds. This is certainly the case, but only under special conditions. With the view of rising individually above their inferior status, the career-minded lay plans for leaving the shop, if only by becoming bureaucratic "representatives" of those they leave behind. If these men, in anticipation of their escape, devote their leisure to intellectual activity, they do so only because this activity holds social significance for them—not as workers, but as individuals anticipating elevation to a higher social stratum.

But there is also the worker who uses his spare time to educate himself, without desiring to "arrive" and with the aim of raising the level of the working class as a whole. Such an attitude, rare as it is these days, is not impossible. It distinguished the elite of the French labor movement during its classical period, many of whose members raised themselves to a lucidity and grasp of contemporary culture which was to be envied by men otherwise more favored. Were not these workers able to use their spare time for intellectual improvement despite their despised social status? In educating themselves with the aim of raising the workers as a class to full human dignity, such men were able to acquire both social importance and esteem in support of their leisure time intellectual activity. These they found in political movement which anticipated a future society. The existence of a healthy and vigorous labor movement proves to be the decisive condition for overcoming the intellectual degradation of the worker, and the use he can make of extended leisure appears to be linked to an attitude of militancy.

If added leisure time is to be of value to the worker who is in harmony with existent society, the scorn for his status which is so prevalent in modern life will have to cease. But no educational effort, no campaign against the injustice of not respecting a man who works with his hands at a task vital to society, no call for change in attitude, will overcome the stigma attached to the worker's lot. Neither goodwill nor psychological techniques can alter social fact: esteem in all societies is apportioned on the basis of one's socially significant activities. Scorn for manual labor means scorn for the laborer. But why should manual labor be scorned? This question leads us to the heart of our problem.

III

For Professor Aymard, manual labor is derogated because it implies a state of dependence for the worker.[7] This is a key idea. There is the dependency of reciprocal and cooperative relationships: there can

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be no steel production without coal mines, no cotton goods without cotton plantations, no factories without transport. Industrialists and statesmen are similarly "dependent" upon one another. In these instances we note an exchange of services of more or less equal value capable of engendering solidarity. Of a different nature is the dependence which binds servant to master, miner to mine owner, factory hand to factory head. Here there is no equal exchange of services, no solidarity, but rather exploitation and a relationship of master to menial. This second type of dependence has from time immemorial been attached to manual labor.

Throughout history, even as far back as neolithic times, those who could choose to work (i.e., produce material goods by manual effort) or not, have always elected to abstain. They have avoided work by placing it upon those not in a position to choose, men living under the compulsion of need or of defeat, or those impotent *vis-à-vis* the politically powerful. Thus manual labor and, consequently, the manual laborer depend upon those who possess or have at their disposal the means of production, or upon those who hold power or have it delegated to them. The dependence here is *de facto,* it is not derived from the nature of labor; it is not "essential." Servitude falls to those who, even before becoming subject to any compulsion, lack the conditions of independence. It is the nature of servitude to taint work itself, adding to the odium of an activity already held unattractive and of low esteem. Furthermore, work does not lead to a knowledge of social and cultural reality. It narrows the scope of the worker's life, and prevents him from rising to mental autonomy. *He who has not achieved such autonomy is at the mercy of those who have.*

Here again it is not modern technology as such which is at fault. The technological developments have merely accentuated the problem. For the machine tender, dependence at the intellectual level has been "built in" at the very core of his activity. His extreme dependence is reflected in the small measure of social prestige accorded to him and his type of work. If manual labor is to be made compatible with an integrated human existence, not merely the scorn in which it is held but the manifold dependence which is its traditional accompaniment must be abolished.

The classical labor movement understood this. It proposed that the disposition of wealth as well as the management and administrative control of economic, social and political life be transferred to the workers. Toward this end, and in order that the benefits of this transformation might be preserved, it proposed to put science at the worker's disposal.

IV

After the turn of the century, certain writers such as the German economist Gustav Schmoller developed the theory that if society is divided into classes, this division cannot be explained simply by the fact that some men possess the means of production and political

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power while others do not.[8] Class hierarchy, Schmoller claimed, is founded upon the diversity of social activity itself. This theory has gained ground, notably in Henri de Man's more sophisticated version developed during the twenties.[9] If the worker finds himself dependent, De Man states, it is because the work process requires not only one man to carry it out, but another to coordinate it. Work being an activity dependent on other activities which are more important, the worker is dependent on other men who are his superiors. Although this subordinating effect of specialization has not applied to all work at all times, can one deny that it has been an inherent characteristic of work since the advent of modern technology?

Heretofore in our discussion, modern technology seemed of secondary or even negligible importance for our problem—the search for a way to humanize work and liberate the worker. Now, in a sudden reversal, it takes on the appearance of a decisive factor. If it is decisive, even with the abolition of capitalist property relations and the transfer of political power, the natural hierarchy based on the functions of execution and coordination would fatally reinstate the dependence of the worker at the working level and, therefore, at the social level. Work would still be scorned. In fact, if dependence is implied in labor, labor is inseparable from contempt for labor. The worker would then seem hemmed in by the alternatives: eternal disgrace or eternal revolt. *If the very nature of labor is inhuman, the worker's defeat is permanent.*

Are there not, however, historical facts which shed a different light on the relation between work and dependence? Professor Aymard, in holding that what was scorned in ancient Greece was not so much work as dependence, recalls that Ulysses constructed his own nuptial bed, knew how to build a boat, proudly challenged all comers to better him in cutting a field of grain. Ulysses worked with his hands but was nonetheless free and honored. Other men in other periods worked with their hands and yet enjoyed freedom and esteem. The case of Ulysses, however, does not prove Professor Aymard's thesis that work in the Homeric age was not yet scorned. Homer's Ulysses is depicted as worker, warrior, and statesman. His swineherd, however, only took care of the pigs. Ulysses treated him with all the respect, even love, that a benevolent master bears toward a faithful servant; but the swineherd's position was one of dependency.

The craftsman of the middle ages, during the period when he was independent and highly esteemed, was not bound by one trade but participated actively as an autonomous individual in the administration and defense of his city. From this and from Ulysses and his swineherd we learn that when work constitutes the center of gravity in the daily cycle of an individual's activities and thought, then dependence is attached to it like a shadow to its object.

If the man who pushes the button of an automatic machine or tightens screws on an assembly line could engage in outside activity of social significance, would not his dependence become susceptible of transformation? Could not the vertical servant to master, "believer"

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to savant, relationship grow into a horizontal "dependence" among equals? Such a hope was present in the earlier labor movement. Its concept of teaching every man a trade as well as an understanding of the sciences was not designed to compensate for the inequality of social activity. The aim was to abolish the line of demarcation which had been established between noble and ignoble activities. Fernand Pelloutier, spokesman for revolutionary French syndicalism, based his entire writings on the idea that the division of labor so conceived must be abolished. Without giving up their work in the shop, the workers would organize and administer production plans themselves, would govern the city themselves. They would accomplish this with the aid of knowledge gained through the educational efforts of the Bourses du Travail (local union centers).

V

Although the activity of work depends upon other activities superimposed upon it, it does not follow that the worker is "naturally" dependent on those placed above him. This false conclusion is drawn only when one is mistaken about the nature of work. It is the nature of work to produce the material conditions for a fully human existence, conditions upon which the worker himself can build his own human existence. But if this is so, it is not the advent of modern technology which has made work inhuman. The demands of material life have always included activities which are neither more attractive nor more edifying than the detailed, repetitive chores of the modern era.

For Marx, liberation of the worker presupposed social change whereby he would no longer be alienated from his work. The worker would possess the riches he produced, a demand usually understood only in its material sense. But we must also understand Marx's meaning at its highest plane: the worker, he who provides the material basis for the true life of man, will possess that life. With the abolition of privileges, it is "noble" activity which the worker will appropriate for himself. It is upon this condition alone that the Marxist vision can be realized.

From time immemorial, the nature of work has been violated. Motivated by self-interest, or in the best of instances acting heedlessly and despite a bad conscience (with "exchange of services" as ready justification), men have found natural a social division of labor which delegates noble activities to the privileged and ignoble ones to the serfs. Rare today are those who will not condemn the man who says to another: "You will earn my bread by the sweat of your brow." But would not a man be equally wrong in saying: "You will work yourself to death so that I may devote myself to noble pursuits"?

Is it not, however, utopian to conceive of a society in which all work with their hands so that all in turn may devote themselves to socially significant intellectual activity and share in the organization and conduct of public affairs? Yet men have long dreamed of such a society. St. John Chrysostom wrote in the 4th century: "It is not good

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to work with the body without working with the mind, and it is sloth to work with the mind without working with the body." Is not this "utopia" the price to pay if one wants civilization to survive—or revive? For the exploited will always tend toward revolt. Bitterness over their debasement may for a time be pushed back into their subconscious depths, but they will ever breed fear in the hearts of those who profit from the established order. The latter will be driven onto one of two paths—either crass violence or camouflaged violence. The citizen will be separated from the manual laborer; the former eliminated, the latter terrorized. Or the social sciences, with their psycho- and socio-technical applications, will be employed not to teach man to know himself and others better, but to manipulate man. The man of science, the intellectual, that spiritual prince, would then find himself reduced to serving not the spirit, but those interested in the debasement of man the worker.

Translated from the French by HARRIMAN JONES

NOTES:

1. Georges Friedman, *Où va le travail humain?* Paris, Gallimard, 1950, pp. 15-16.
2. C. Wright Mills, *White Collar,* New York, 1951, p. XIX ff.
3. *Ibid,* p. 351.
4. Maurice Halbwachs, *Les Niveaux de Vie et la Classe Ouvrière,* Thèse, Paris, 1911.
5. Henri de Man, *La Joie au Travail,* Paris, Alcan, 1930, p. 299.
6. Camara Laye, *L'Enfant noir,* Paris, Plon, 1953, pp. 205-07.
7. Professor Aymard's address "Journée de Psychologie et d'Histoire du Travail et des Techniques," Toulouse, 1941, printed in *Journal de Psychologie normale et pathologique,* 41ème année, No. 1, Jan.-Mar., 1948.
8. Dr. Gustav Schmoller, "La Division du Travail étudiée au point de vue historique," *Revue d'Economie politique,* 1889.
9. Henri de Man, *op cit.*

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THE RIGHT TO BE LAZY

Henri Rabassiere

What the Lord did on the eighth day the Bible does not state; it is permitted to speculate that He continued to rest and, for all that the last million years' record shows, never returned to the hectic working spree of the first six days. And when, after another million years, He will be sitting gloriously on His throne, with angels leisurely winging around Him, He will behold His arrangement with satisfaction and say: All is as it should be. By definition, anyone who can offer Himself such a long vacation must be God; by the same token, the lesser breeds are eating their bread in the sweat of their brow. He will muse upon the sorry fate of the Devil, busily running the world, rushing hither and thither to aggrandize his little kingdom and really leading one hell of an existence. And He will take pity on the damned —Sisyphus rolling his stone up hill, Tantalus hopping for his apples, the Danaides pouring water into the bottomless barrel.

For it's labor that is Hell and leisure that is Paradise. Mankind knew that even when it was very young. We never got over that first and most effective of all curses which was the punishment for the first sin. The curse has worked well indeed; we still think it's a sin to revive that blissful state which existed before the Fall. But the wisdom of the peoples has never forgotten; it imagines Heaven as the absence of pain and effort; it exalts royalty ("The king was in the counting house...") as representatives of the gods on earth—clearly because leisure is the measure of distinction and pleasure is divine.

Anyway, the people have always been wiser than the textbooks; they never believed that wealth makes no man happy. Neither do they believe that riches are usually come by the hard way. Experience shows that the harder the work, the less the pay. The dirtiest jobs are not paid in proportion to the marginal "disutility" or distaste of their execution, but in accordance with the disrepute in which a person stooping to them is held by his equals and betters. Society may teach children that work never dishonors anybody, but when they grow up they would rather work less and receive higher honors.

This, Aristotle would say had he lived to see it, is as Nature would have it; for it is debatable whether those who do the menial work have a soul, whereas those who have leisure to enjoy the pleasures of life, must of necessity have richer experience and a larger scope of soul. The more leisure the higher the rank on the social scale. On the other hand,

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the most effective slogan of revolutionary class hatred has been: he that does not toil neither shall he eat.

THAT TERRIBLE REVOLUTION DID HAPPEN, though the exact time of its happening is not quite clear. Sociologists generally credit the Reformation with bringing about a complete change in people's attitudes toward work. Dr. Martin Luther, it will be remembered, rejected "good works," apparently because they interfere with works *tout court,* good or bad; he taught that the rich and mighty would go to heaven despite their bad works and the poor and humble for their good works; he also admonished the princes to keep the peasants in their place, and if failing, to quarter, wheelbreak, blind, whip and hang them. An even gloomier chap was Calvin. When he governed Geneva he declared it a sin against God and a burden on the city's treasury if any man were idle; he sent the spiritual and terrestrial police into every household to make sure every man was working. He was one of the first churchmen to condone a modest amount of usury (by calling it interest; stinginess he called thrift, and hoarding—diligence). His defense of the usurer was repeated by that staunch churchman, Mellon, who never foreclosed properties unless the tenants were "weakened by bad habits and extravagant living"—which unfortunately he found to be the case fairly regularly. Calvin never married and he forbade his followers all pleasures, luxuries and above all, idleness, which gives a man ideas. Before Freud he discovered that frustration can be converted into furious work. His friend Zwingli thought that "Labor is a thing so godlike . . . in things of life, the laborer is most like to God."

Their later followers, however, found it difficult to persuade sensible men that this could be true, if only because the Catholics were having a good time and still expected God's forgiveness. Therefore they invented Calling. It is difficult to explain Calling if you can't say it's another word for work. Calling means work as a crusade; it means that a man has been identified with his work so intimately that his life no longer consists of hours of work and hours of play or rest: it is all work. If he does rest, it is to restore his energy for work; his recreation, too, must be usefully employed; his play must exercise his mental or physical powers. *Kraft durch Freude* was not invented by the Nazis; this mentality had been there all along waiting to be topped off with the usual German instinct for turning all-too-seriousness into ridicule. The Americans are only slightly behind the Germans; however, as is fitting, our example comes not from government propaganda but from commercial advertising. A maker of foam rubber tells us to "rest efficiently" on his mattresses. Now, I like foam rubber and using it for rest should be a pleasure, but that ad man has spoiled it for me. If I feel that even in my sleep I am being efficient I don't enjoy it any more.

Even Calvin's universe had its rewards, however. In the first place, work was pleasing to God; then, to follow one's Calling brought recognition among men. Some people's Calling did not call them to great deeds, nor to great riches either; but just to fill one's place as ordained

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from on-high. Doing one's job well was satisfaction in itself. Finally, a man could look with pride at his work. Whatever he did was completely his own; and even if done in cooperation with others, he still had insight into the whole process. Our language has retained a reminiscence of this bliss: we still say "work" for both, the act of creating and the product. By contrast, we say "labor" for the expenditure of human energy and for the supply of same. In the English language (and in none other, so far as I know), the word "job" can be set aside to name the social and economic relationship between the worker and his working place. Since language is pre-fabricated thought, a worker referring to his "job" is revealing a truth about modern society; he is "class-conscious." But if he naively says "my work," forgetting that he neither owns his product nor controls the process of its production, he atavistically uses conceptions from the craftsman's age. His parlance beclouds the fact that under the conditions of industrial capitalism the worker is separated from his product, first by a huge apparatus of machinery which does not belong to him, second by his contract which deprives him of the fruit of his labor, third by the market. All he knows is that for the time being he has a job requiring him to supply a specified amount of labor and to cooperate in the production of some merchandise which his boss thinks he can sell. Usually he specializes in some phase of production and has very little insight into the whole process. He cannot possibly feel the satisfaction of an artisan looking at his work; he is not asked to be "creative" and has very little chance even to show ingenuity. All his pride is concentrated on the work process, which he can speed up, even improve, but which never leads to any fulfillment or end.

THE MORE EFFICIENT THE WORKER is, *qua* worker, the greater his estrangement from his product. So much of it passes over his work bench; he boasts of his inventiveness in cutting corners, getting out more production in a given time, making more money to take home.

The myth of Productivity has driven out the friendly gods of old. In their place we have enthroned the religion of Efficiency. We love efficiency, paradoxically, for two reasons: it saves "labor," but on the other hand it makes working more efficient. If efficiency were used only to speed up our working hours and extend our leisure time, it would be all to the good. But this is not the case at all, or very rarely so. My hero in technology always was that attendant boy who was too lazy to turn by hand all the valves on Newcomen's first primitive steam engine; he connected the various faucets with rods which later were attached to the fly-wheel, and thus invented the feed-back. This invention really was meant to save "work"; but when his employers later used it, they did so to save "labor." Now here is the paradox: as a human being, the worker should be glad that machinery was being invented to relieve him of (at least some of) the drudgery; as an employee he had to fight hard not to be relieved entirely by the machine. Under capitalistic conditions he had to fight on two fronts—on the one

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hand for his "right to work," on the other hand for his "right to leisure." Fortunately, both flies could be caught with the same swatter —the long history of class strife in the 19th century is the story of a gradual shortening of the working day. With this device, workers have assured themselves a place among human beings; they have won recognition for their desire to rest and play beyond the call of duty, while at the same time they have stretched the need for labor.

The price of better working conditions was the division of labor, or the acceptance of, and acquiescence in, the conditions of factory work by the worker, his integration into a huge organization of well laid out production processes, his subservience to the requirements of machine production. In this organization, the worker no longer has control over his product; at best, he may have control of his machine, but in most cases the machine will have control of him. Only the top management has control of production and the sales manager has control of the product. The worker often does not even see his product, he even may have little insight into the production process. When the first news of the atomic bomb was published, the most shocking revelation, to me, was not its enormous power of destruction, but the report that thousands of people had been employed in its production without knowing what they were doing. Here all the traditional notions of "workmanship," "pride in one's work," "calling" were voided of any meaning. Professional prowess no longer lies in "creativeness" nor in anything that refers to the product. The satisfaction is not in creating the product; it is in productivity. The worker is completely estranged from his product, and in fact, any opinion research probing a little beneath the surface will reveal that workers love their machines but are indifferent to what they produce. (Foundations please take note; this is a really worthwhile project which also might be interesting to management).

Marxist critics of capitalism first considered "alienation" as a purely economic estrangement of the worker from his product. No amount of worker participation will overcome this condition, for the simple reason that even under the most favorable conditions, the employers don't have control over the verdict of the market either. The condition, however, also is inherent in modern mass production as such; even an entirely state-controlled or cooperative enterprise cannot escape it. The remedy is trade union action which gets for the worker as much out of the proceeds as the market will carry—a remedy which does not remedy the situation, but makes it less obnoxious. The enterprise can give the worker a very decent or even a very high (monopolistic) wage and make working conditions for him really pleasant with MUZAK, air conditioning, coffee break and other devices of "human engineering," all justified as conducive to higher efficiency, of course; still, we are even more deeply entangled in the basic contradiction—that work and leisure are two very different things; the devices of personnel management only help to underline the basic fact that labor is measured by its disutility to the worker, that he strives to exert himself less, to spend less time inside the factory, has no pride in his work and gets

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little satisfaction out of a job well done—except perhaps the promotion which enables him to spend more time outside the factory and enjoy it better. This condition transcends capitalism; it is characteristic of all industrial societies, including a socialist economy based on industrial production. Isn't it significant that travelers to Utopia usually find themselves in garden cities suggesting a pre-capitalist society?

All the devices of human engineering and personnel relations are just so many acknowledgments of the fact that work generally is unpleasant, that office hours are a nuisance and work discipline is degrading. This unpleasantness is overcome by morale-building ideologies, such as "work ennobles the worker," "common interest goes before self-interest," "duty before pleasure," "there is a war on." Sportsmanlike nations can be persuaded to stage productivity competitions, warlike nations can be asked to outproduce the enemy. Totalitarian governments particularly have developed techniques of combining war ideology with racing images; they constantly organize battles of the grain, battles of production, battles of the cradle, etc. Failure to increase production unfailingly results in a charge of "sabotage," but the most potent device of totalitarian imposition is the myth of Productivity which persuades the worker that his job is his duty, and that Duty, or one's job, stands higher in the hierarchy of values than one's personal needs.

At best, such verbalizations are the results of utter confusion; when the philosophers speak of *homo faber,* they mean the inventor, the creator, the playful explorer, the craftsman perhaps, but never the industrial worker. Man is free and creative only when he plays; he transcends himself only when his work serves no purpose; he fulfills himself only when he has no "job" to do. He develops his personality only when he throws off the thraldom of labor. He creates "works" only where he is not in the position of a "worker." The nihilistic, fascist ideologist, Ernst Juenger, went as far as to "suggest the question, whether workers are not of a third sex"; a robot need not be human.

THAT WORKERS ARE PEOPLE was most forcefully asserted by Marx's son-in-law, Paul Lafargue, in his slogan "The Right to be Lazy." His pamphlet under this title tells the story of a hundred years' fight for shorter hours; but there was more to it. Lafargue had not been brought up in the Calvinist virtues and did not believe in the pseudo-socialist philosophy that work alone redeems man from this vale of miseries. He felt that man needed very much to be redeemed from the obligation to work, and saw that industrial machinery might help him to get rid of the drudgery. Much as he welcomed this opportunity, he also saw the danger of man's enslavement by the machines. The bold speculations of his eminent father-in-law on the all-pervasiveness of labor made him uneasy; he did not deny that socialists should fight for "the right to work," but he was not so sure that they also should fight for the duty to work. To him, it was just as important to fight for the right not to work. He was a brave man who truly believed in freedom, and when he felt that his life had been played out, he allowed

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no duty to retain him; he quit, even in his last action asserting a man's right to take his life into his own hands.

Lafargue was 30 years younger than Marx, and in the meantime two more generations have passed. To say that I disagree with Marx amounts to saying that today I can see where Marx was a child of his age. He believed in work as man's salvation from exploitation. His enemies were the leisure classes which were monopolizing consumption. The streak of the Jewish prophet and chiliast in Marx blinded him to the virtues of luxury and pleasure; his own life was that of a zealot; he poked fun at Lassalle's suggestion that the workers ought to increase their desiderata. So deeply was he steeped in the idea of productivity that he even proposed labor service, and his idea of progressive education was to merge the factories with the schoolroom. Marx was a Victorian gentleman and a Prussian scholar, besides being an Apostle of Justice; in neither capacity did he understand the workers. He had made himself such a high image of the ideal proletarian (with arms growing thinner and fists erected higher) that the specimens whom he met in real life usually annoyed him. Philosophical materialist, he liked them best when they were least concerned with the good life; and he honestly expected them to sacrifice their consumer interests to the beauties of the socialist society of pure producers.

Under the conditions of capitalism, the worker tries to welsh on his contract and delivers less labor than he is expected to; the employer, on the other hand, holds the union responsible for the delivery of an honest day's work. Under state socialism or state capitalism, the worker's interest in his "job" is supposed to wax to enthusiastic proportions; it's "his" state he is working for and the benefit is supposed to accrue to all. As a consumer and taxpayer, the worker certainly should tell himself, as his own employee, to work harder; but unless he develops a split personality it does not happen that way. His participation in management is only vicarious; he may be his boss in the abstract; but this abstract personality confronts him in the alienated shape of a supervisor, and the conflict can be resolved only by institutionalizing the split of personality—free trade unions must bargain as his representatives (*qua* worker) with management as his representative (*qua* consumer). Management still will insist on labor-saving devices to cut costs, while the union will ask for work-saving devices even if they are costly. This applies notably to jobs which are dirty and demand great exertions, but give little or no satisfaction psychologically.

I simply do not believe that "socialist conscience" will drive anybody to volunteer for the job of a groundhog. Lowly jobs can be filled only by one of four devices: higher wages; special honors and/or some sense of adventure that may be connected with them; labor service or some other form of forced labor; finally, the presence of a lower class or race whose members are prevented from rising to better positions. I reject the last two and consider the second as too rare to be generalized. Groundhogs must be paid higher wages or given longer vacations after the first enthusiasm of exerting themselves for their own government

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has worn off. The same, however, though less drastically demonstrable, is true of all government efforts to increase productivity. A socialist government wishing to stay clear of compulsion must recognize the freedom of trade unions and cooperatives. I cannot imagine a socialist society in which all is eternal harmony; least of all can I accept the ideal of a docile labor force, bent on furiously fulfilling its duty toward the socialist fatherland and enthusiastically improving its productivity. If capitalism were to be criticized only because it is wasteful and inefficient, I would have little quarrel with it; but it is wasteful with human happiness and economical only with material goods. I expect socialism to be rather wasteful with material resources but thrifty with unpleasantness imposed on human beings. The most efficient, i.e., cost-saving, economical way of producing merchandise may not always be the best from the standpoint of the worker's comfort. Our technology has advanced efficiency to provide for everybody; we can well afford to be inefficient wherever it suits us better. There was a time when "monopolies" were accused of sabotaging technological progress for the sake of profit. Today, automation is precipitating a new industrial revolution before society has made the necessary adjustments to use the new efficiency for the benefit of all mankind. We have become slaves of Progress; we have not dared to stop the development of atomic power as long as the nations cannot agree on disarmament. Marx was right against the Luddites: industrialism and capitalism could not be arrested but had to be digested. The atom, however, is right against Marx, and we have not digested its implications yet. The age of the robot is here; mankind can sit back and relax; the need for efficiency no longer worries us; productivity no longer is the measure of human contribution to the process of production; our needs can be filled by push-button operations.

OUR PROBLEM IS RATHER to increase our ability to enjoy our leisure time. We need to develop our creative ranges of play; we need to learn what it means to be free from the drudgery of work. Up to now our play has been modeled after the image of our work; even in consuming we maintained producer attitudes, or even worse—the dull and dutiful attitudes of factory work. We have to forget, to un-learn the producer attitudes; we have to renounce efficiency and productivity as human attributes. We have to insist on our right to be lazy and just human.

Indeed, why efficiency? It is generally agreed that socialism will be a very cumbersome way of providing administration and planning. If we admit, with Engels, that the cook ought to have a go at ruling the state, I am afraid we shall not only eat less well but also have more serious reasons to gripe (by the way, I think this is absolutely necessary and healthy; people under socialism must have some outlet for their natural aggressiveness). If we rotate labor from town to country, from manual to clerical, from executing to executive, out goes the expert and the efficiency. Not that I believe in these silly devices; I

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only refer to them for two purposes: first, to show that even the fathers of socialist thought, who introduced them, must have been aware that socialism is not a way to organize society more efficiently. Second, they show how much they were aware of the problem of human values which I am discussing here. But in those days they could only think of making work more "humane"; they had to organize their ideas of socialism around man the producer. It was only natural that they had to come to ridiculous conclusions. I suspect it might even be shown that the idea of totalitarian dictatorship is inherent in their conception of productivity. Now we can make the Copernican turn: not by thinking of better devices of organizing *homo faber* shall we liberate him from the realm of necessity, but by resolutely acknowledging his human ability to enjoy life and to act creatively in purposeless play.

Once labor has been recognized as something to get away from and leisure has been recognized as the legitimate and significant sphere of human endeavors, we even might expect those psychological changes which are just utopian dreams in the classical theory of socialism. The founding fathers all imagined that socialist production habits would create community spirit and other virtues which would prevent the recurrence of acquisitiveness and of war. There was neither proof in theory for such possibilities, nor did experiment bear these hopes out, except where communities were founded on a strictly religious basis. If we succeed, however, in substituting a religion of laziness for the worship of industriousness, the acquisitive instincts, while they still cannot be killed, might find no cultural and social nourishment and no economic sphere in which they could become active. Indeed, Fourier's paranoiac conjecture of a new animal might for the first time be rationally discussed. Those who might find some of his suggestions strange are asked to consider that he believed in play, too.

* * *

P.S.: My attention is drawn to the following passage from *Das Kapital,* vol. III, pt. 2, ch. 48: "The realm of freedom does not begin until work stops being determined by need and external necessity; by nature it lies beyond the realm of material production proper... [even under socialist planning, labor] always remains in the realm of necessity. Beyond this begins that humane development of human energy which finds its end in itself, the true realm of freedom . . . " Marx indeed here seems less orthodox, from the standpoint of alienated philosophy, than I suspected, while I seem less heretical, from the Marxian point of view, than I fondly believed. But there is a Marx quotation for every occasion, and overlooking the whole trend of his thinking, I would agree with Erich Fromm that Marx more than other socialist writers was influenced by the ideas of his time. Incidentally, I regret a difference of terminology with Fromm's fine discussion of the same problem in his new book *The Sane Society;* I read it after this essay had been set, otherwise it would have been easy to coordinate my language with his.

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THE "NEW AMERICAN RIGHT"

Bernard Rosenberg

For a while it seemed as if there were no more challenging problem in our domestic life than McCarthyism. To be sure, the man and the ism were shorthand for a cluster of unpleasant—not to say symptomatic—developments. How did the disease begin? Why did it reach epidemic proportions? Could one logically account for the real, if limited, success of demagogues, the oppressive atmosphere they helped create, and the consequent erosion of our liberties?

It can hardly be claimed that the more sophisticated American intellectuals responded to these problems with overwhelming alacrity; but by now most of them are openly annoyed. They generally admit that there was a troglodyte in the land who symbolized a major threat to the Bill of Rights. It is no longer necessary for them to go about calming one another. Like the rest of us, they were and remain a bit frightened, and wish at least to understand certain aspects of our recent political history.

But as John Dewey once remarked, the data are not given; they must be taken. An active search to secure and interpret facts has been underway for a year or so among an influential and distinguished group of writers who might be designated—since they themselves have so great a passion for new labels—as "the new liberals." Each of their articles, as they have appeared in magazines like *Partisan Review, The New Leader, The American Scholar* and *The Yale Review,* has been individually impressive, despite disagreements one might have; but now that they have been collected into a book,* edited by Daniel Bell, they do not seem quite so impressive. There are a number of contributors: Bell himself, Richard Hofstadter, David Riesman, Nathan Glazer, Peter Viereck, Seymour Martin Lipset and Talcott Parsons. Any one of these, unaided by the others, can tell you more than you need to know about what many people have hitherto found rather mystifying. As a group they looked everywhere for explanations, and found them—everywhere.

We begin by sharing the authors' interest in a strange phenomenon, variously designated as the Pseudo-Conservative Revolt (Hofstadter), the

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emergence of the Discontented Classes (Riesman and Glazer) and the rise of the Radical Right (Lipset). We end by wondering how it is possible for one country to contain such a vast conglomeration of reactionaries. The question is no longer "Why McCarthyism?" but, "How on earth could there be anything else?" Taken in sum, these essays imply that the New Whatever-It-Is has virtually unlimited sources and resources.

Consider one example: the historian Richard Hofstadter suggests that old-family Americans are peculiarly susceptible to pseudo-conservatism because many of them are losing their old claims to status. As a result they tend to express shabby-genteel resentment in one obnoxious way or another, but usually through organizaciones like the D.A.R. Which sounds reasonable, even incisive. Very well. We have an insight, but only one in a barrelful. Hofstadter immediately offers a second insight. In addition to the old American families there are the new American families. The latter have been advancing in the world, but not fast enough, for there are barriers to their full acceptance. This makes them uneasy, impatient and ultrapatriotic. So, those going down meet those coming up, *les extrèmes se touchent,* and by their fusion they produce McCarthyism.

The analysis would appear to be comprehensive since it encompasses all American families. A villainous role is tacitly assigned to social mobility as such. Only a static system would preclude the kind of movement in any direction that presumably has such a deleterious effect on political life.

Riesman and Glazer are similarly inclusive. Thus for instance, they see discontent germinating in two age groups, the old and the young. A great many elderly and retired people who "were not raised in the do-it-yourself tradition" can't adjust to the present prosperity. Besides, they feel somewhat straitened on fixed incomes. But among youth too, many individuals have been made ill at ease by an affluence which descended upon them so suddenly that it did not allow time for necessary changes in their character structure. Hence, the old and the young are susceptible.

Are there significant religious patterns in the appeals of McCarthyism? Well, Puritanism still exerts a powerful influence on America, and it is pin-pointed as a major source of contemporary intolerance. But several writers, notably Lipset, also remark that the extreme right attracts Catholics, a fact they ask us not to gloss over out of fear or politeness. Moreover, George Sokolsky, Roy Cohn, Walter Winchell and Rabbi Schultz are McCarthy's Jewish brain-trusters. For all this a plausible reason can always be found: insecurity may be attributed and indeed located in almost any group. So it would seem that only

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the Quakers are possibly exempt—though there is nothing in the method used by the contributors to *The New American Right* that couldn't take care of that, too, in case a Quaker following of McCarthyism were discovered.

II

The forces of darkness gather in every corner of America. From New England comes the Puritan spirit, from the West bumptious parvenus and old-fashioned vigilantism, from the North status anxiety on every level, and from the South an expectable hostility to freedom (although here Viereck is on firmer ground than Glazer and Lipset when he introduces one of his many paradoxes: "Often untypical or tardy about new trends, the South is more opposed to the good cause of Negro rights and to the bad cause of McCarthyism than the rest of the nation.")

Workers, small businessmen, oil barons, professionals, the old middle class and the new middle class, early immigrants, city dwellers and suburbanites, liberals, populists, conservatives and radicals, Catholics, Jews and Protestants, young and old, upward-mobile, downard-mobile, and immobile: all, all are implicated. So far has social science moved from the particularistic fallacy, stressing one dominant or decisive factor, to multiple causation, stating all possible factors and giving them approximately equal weight. This is multidimensionality run riot. *When we know so much we know scarcely anything.*

Within their unlimited "pluralistic" view, Bell and his contributors are also endlessly inventive. They seldom fail to supply the right neologism for a fresh idea. Specifically, the reader is indebted to Riesman and Glazer, who have already provided so many new and useful terms, for yet another, namely, the discontented classes, or alternatively, the ex-masses. These classes have been thrown up by the boom which has taken previously harmless people and propelled them into positions of some importance where, for all their pecuniary well-being, they suffer from a sense of economic stress and acute intellectual deprivation.

> But the more significant, and more difficult to understand and grapple with, is a discontent which arises from *the mental discomforts that come with belonging to a class rather than a mass*—discomforts founded less on economic than on intellectual uncertainty. (My emphasis—B.R.)

To Riesman and Glazer it has long been evident that apathy among the uneducated masses is highly desirable. Their argument has been presented at length and in many contexts. After Samuel Stouffer's recent study revealed the all-but universal apathy of Americans, one might have expected a long sigh of relief from these two observers who have worried for years about our overpoliticization. Instead they

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are still exercised about too much interest in public policy. As long as the underlying population remained quiet and inert, New Dealers could semisurreptitiously "put over" the welfare state and internationalism. It was better in those days, with mass acquiescence to intelligent guidance from above. Now, however, a remarkable turn-about has occurred so that the formerly inarticulate apathetics are vociferous and thereby susceptible to demagogic manipulation while the once voluble liberals have nearly been silenced. The liberals' indifference, we learn, is a serious matter. "What could be more crucial than the outcome of the struggle between the Strategic Air Command and the Army Ground Forces? [Surely something.—B.R.] Yet who concerns himself with it?" I don't. Do you? Somehow, the contemplation of my distance from this issue does not stir in me the deep guilt feelings it probably ought to.

A question less charged with emotion and moral judgment is the following: what can be done with a dichotomy like masses and classes? Did persons who have since ascended in the social scale never belong to a class? Were they previously amorphous ciphers, inchoate, anonymous? The familiar proposition that there is now no working class in the U.S. or that there will soon be none, is turned on its head by the counter-iconoclasts (if I too may coin a term) who maintain that there never was one. There were only masses, and the masses have now been converted into classes. That's the trouble! At least there seem to be several classes, when they are not definitely identified as one heterogeneous class. Actually, Riesman and Glazer do not have too firm a grip on their slippery new concept. It includes the Texas millionaires and men like Howard Hughes who "can do business operating a plane, yacht or hotel room." Yet of the same class or classes, they say:

> Conspicuous underconsumption has replaced conspicuous consumption as the visible sign of status, with the result that men who have made enough money to indulge the gaudy dreams of their underprivileged youth learn all too fast that they must not be flamboyant. [It would hardly do to be flamboyant in inconspicuous planes, yachts and hotels where business is transacted with the least possible ostentation.—B.R.]

From Bell to Parsons, every essayist agrees that the rightist eruption in American politics is in some measure traceable to a group like the discontented classes. Who they are remains unclear and must remain unclear. Otherwise the circular reasoning they all use would have to be abandoned. As it stands, we have a thesis which asserts that from the discontented classes are recruited those who belong to the radical right, and the radical right is a segment of society identical with those who participate in the pseudo-conservative revolt because they are part

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of the discontented classes. If you follow this path long enough, it leads straight back to almost everyone in the American population. What our writers never trouble to do is to explain why certain members of the "discontented classes" are more vulnerable to demagogic manipulation than others. Our initial bewilderment, partly dispelled, is finally restored.

III

Whatever the casual connections may be, we do have a mess on our hands. The sociologist Talcott Parsons, for one, wants something done about it. He favors and says he has consistently favored "far-reaching change in the structure of our society," than which nothing could be more intrinsically radical. A superficial inference would be that Parsons really proposes to go to the root of the matter. But no.

The word, "radical," still retained some of its purity even after "democratic," "liberal," "revolutionary" and "socialist" had all been debased. Now it too is contaminated. Lipset explains the phrase, radical right, which when first encountered looks and sounds a bit like "chaste whore," as follows: "This group is characterized as radical because it desires to make far reaching changes in American institutions and because it seeks to eliminate from American political life those persons and institutions which threaten either its values or its economic interests." But is a program for the disestablishment of democratic government radical? Or is it simply reactionary, if not counter-revolutionary? Or are all these the same? After all, neither Eisenhower nor Stevenson nor their respective parties differ very much. So why should we distinguish between Joe McCarthy and Norman Thomas? Lump them all together, and you have greatly simplified both the taxonomic and the ethical problem.

But what does this make Talcott Parsons? It is his considered judgment that America desperately needs an élite. We should create (some of his colleagues would say re-create) "social strata where traditional political responsibility is ingrained... Broadly, I think, a political élite in the two main aspects of 'politicians' whose specialities consist in the management of public opinion and of 'administrators' in both civil and military services, must be greatly strengthened." Furthermore, Parsons believes that this ruling class must have a heavy business representation. If not, it is doomed to ineffectiveness and the perpetuation of dangerous internal conflict. For under "American conditions," he points out, it is impossible to lead the people against business.

One might have supposed, naively, that "far-reaching change in the structure of our society" would entail other conditions, perhaps a

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"circulation of the élite" calculated to put business where it belongs. For Parsons, however, it belongs in a rather large driver's seat, shared with a cadre of subsidiary generals, professors and clergymen. Wall Street, West Point, the universities and the churches must all be tapped, the better to "manage" public opinion while governing in harmonious accord on what their spokesmen regard as the commonweal. But for the misfortune that so large a part of this utopia has already materialized, its explicit formulation by Parsons might be rather terrifying. As it is, his radical change would merely compound several of the sorriest features he has found in a bad situation.

In some ways the situation was worse last year. Since then, even with civil liberties scaled down and their diminution too often taken for granted, Senator McCarthy himself has gone into eclipse. The new turn in affairs is so recent that Bell, *et al.* have not had a chance to do their usual exhaustive analysis of it. By way of compensation, *The New American Right* is sprinkled with tributes to Walter Lippmann for his perspicacity in foreseeing how it would happen. Bell sums up the pro-Eisenhower Lippmann-Alsop position of 1952 and adds his approval; events, he feels, have proved the soundness of their case. Thus, "A Democratic President would only have polarized the parties and given the extreme Republican wing the license to lead the attack; the administration of a moderate Republican could act as a damper on the extreme right." But as it happens, that's not the way it happened. McCarthy was living high on the hog, higher than ever, throughout the first two years of Eisenhower's administration. Then the Democrats took over Congress, and *then* McCarthy suffered his collapse. There were many other important circumstances that affected McCarthy's fate. But the one inessential condition was singled out by Bell: Eisenhower's election.

The feast is a rich one. Many more examples of wit and wisdom could be cited. I content myself with just one more, from the editor's pen:

> One ultimately comes to admire the "practical politics" of a Theodore Roosevelt and his scorn for the intransigents, like Godkind and Villard, who, refusing to yield to expediency, could never put through their reforms.

Unfortunately, Bell does not speak for himself alone; this is the true voice of many "new liberals." He and his collaborators have been overpowered by a mood that makes it natural for them in 1955 to embrace the old bully-boy Theodore Roosevelt and to vilify the muckrakers. That mood is plainly deducible from *The New American Right,* and therein lies its major interest.

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KEYNESIAN ECONOMICS — A CRITIQUE

Ben B. Seligman

There are few occasions when so abstruse a discipline as theoretical economics enters into general currency. Adam Smith's unseen hand and Marx's surplus value are the two main examples up to the present in which recondite notions were absorbed into popular ideology. In this way an economic theory has been frequently employed as an elaborate rationalization of what was thought to be desirable social action. This was particularly the case in times of crisis, when the demand for getting something done was persistent. And the theorist who was able to supply the answers was often accorded the role of hero.

This was the pleasant fate of John Maynard Keynes, whose impact on popular thinking has been the greatest since Smith, Ricardo and Marx. New Dealers grasped at his theories to justify what it was they were doing. Keynes himself had a rather happy facility for recognizing history as it moved, and he was not averse to suggesting that its motion was essentially Keynesian. His major work, *The General Theory of Employment, Interest and Money,* the influence of which has been matched only by *Capital* and the *Wealth of Nations,* showed that governmental action was just what was necessary to meet the psychological and economic needs of the day.* It was his ability to frame a set of popular ideas within a resplendent border of principles that made Keynes so well received an economist.

Born in 1883 of a Cambridge family (his father, J. N. Keynes, who outlived him, was a noted logician and economist in his own right), Keynes' background was traditionally unexciting. The intellectual climate was characterized by a calm Victorian utilitarianism in which reform was conceived to be the instrumentality of progress and intelligent discussion the primary basis for attaining the ultimate goal of social perfectability. Keynes never surrendered his belief in the idea of progress; when world war and a depression undermined his original illusions, he sought new ones in order to sustain the notion that man can always move closer to the angels.

* It would be quite wrong, however, to call Keynes the father of the New Deal, as seems to be the fashion in some quarters. While Keynes' interest in the use of public works to counteract unemployment goes back to 1924, when Lloyd George began to advocate this device, the final shape of his theories came after the New Deal was initiated. The Rooseveltian program had both reform and recovery aspects, but Keynes was interested primarily in the latter. The New Deal itself evolved in a purely *ad hoc* fashion and by men who eschewed economic theory.

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A short stay in the British India Office in 1906 drove Keynes to take a post at Cambridge where Alfred Marshall's *Principles* ruled the realm of economics. Here he began as an avowed Marshallian for whom basic principles were well established; only the discovery of practical rules of application remained. This gave to economic study a condition of serenity that was never to be recaptured. At first Keynes ignored much contemporary theorizing, which was perhaps an advantage, since he could later devise a system of his own without too much concern for its relationship to other doctrines.

Keynes accepted the proposition that the interests of the various groups in society were harmoniously balanced. Whatever suggestions there were in Ricardo of dire social conflict were dismissed by the Classicists to a fiery subterranean existence in the pages of Marx's *Capital*. The English utilitarians, who had accepted some forms of government intervention, found the theory of harmony not incompatible with their scruples, for it was possible to justify at least a minimum of government action as a means of preserving the balanced state. On these grounds, Keynesian theory, even as later developed, could be made to support utilitarianism: if unequal distribution of income, for example, is the cause of economic imbalance, then measures to attain a better distribution increases social happiness (or as the economist would prefer, economic welfare). Keynes came to feel that "effective demand" was the prime mover in the attainment of this balance and if government actions were needed to make the economy operate properly, he was willing to go along. What he wanted above all else was to make capitalism work. Here he was no different from Marshall or Mill or Say.

Keynes, however, countered traditional long-run equilibrium theory with a rather incisive short-run analysis that led him directly to the theory of employment. Ricardo had placed income distribution at the center of economic theory, and as a result, said Keynes, classical theory became overly concerned with the way the national income was divided and insufficiently with its size. It assumed that the level of activity which set the amount of the national income was already fixed, and moreover at full employment levels. Keynes argued that this was a gratuitous assumption. He attacked the cardinal capitalist appeal to unremitting thrift by demonstrating that husbanding resources during a depression was harmful. His argument that cutting money wages was no cure for economic imbalance upset traditional habits of thought, although he did say that a reduction in real wages might turn the trick. But above all he was concerned with the flow of income and here he began to see more clearly than most that money was no mere veil for transactions but the source from which was derived the energy that made the capitalist economy tick. With this new vision, Keynes believed that he was leaving the classical system behind.

But in the early work, *Indian Currency and Finance* (1913), Keynes was still a classically oriented economist, despite its plea for a managed currency. What he urged in this book was a gold exchange standard with a central bank that would conserve gold reserves and avoid the

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unusual drains on Indian gold. Yet, as his biographer Roy Harrod says,* he appears even this early as a man of expediency. That is, he was always advocating some practical course of action. As he continued to observe the economic scene, he felt more and more that satisfactory price levels and full employment would have to be created by tinkering, by deliberate policy. All his early writings emphasized the practical. But by the time Keynes went to work on his *Treatise on Money* (1930) there was some suggestion of a developing theoretical synthesis which was to flower later into the structure of the *General Theory*.

In the years after the first World War, Keynes concerned himself mainly with the problem of price "stability." This was to be his major goal and it did not trouble him that it would mean the destruction of the gold standard. But, asked his opponents, would this not result in continuously rising prices or worse, wildcat inflation? Keynes was not perturbed; rising prices were fine, for that would stimulate investment and business activity. Furthermore, such a condition would weaken the *rentiers* who were an inactive class anyway: their desire for high interest rates was a serious impediment to Keynesian aims. Thus, monetary manipulation seemed to him at this time the most effective way of solving economic ills. It was this attitude that led some persons to call him a congenital inflationist.

At this point it might be well to clarify what is meant by inflation, since it does not simply mean an increase in the amount of money in circulation. During the 1930s, for example, monetary supply increased, yet no one would suggest that inflation existed at that time. Nor can such a situation be described as merely an increase in income and spending. Increased demand for money in relation to available goods does force prices upward. However, if this is anticipated, it is possible to make adjustments that would circumvent "inflationary" effects. It is rather the unexpected, unanticipated events that are important. When unforeseen rises in the price level permit demand to exceed supply, true inflation develops with troublesome social impact; there is a loss of real income, maladjustments between creditor and debtor ensue, and distortions in the use of resources upset accustomed economic equilibrium.

This conception of inflation, however, reveals a basic bias in the Keynesian approach. Neo-Keynesians today openly concede that what they want is to achieve "stability" through a steadily rising price system.** They suggest that inflation in the ordinary sense is no longer the heinous affair that the conservative mood has always made it out to be. They insist also that a secular rise in prices can be a pleasant and respectable experience. This implies that if the main purpose of economic policy is to attain full employment through "balanced" government spending, then the accompanying cost of a price rise ought not be too disturbing. All this is to be accomplished by economic gadgetry; a low

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* *The Life of John Maynard Keynes: A Personal Biography*, by Roy E. Harrod, 1951.
** See *Post Keynesian Economics*, edited by K. K. Kurihara. Rutgers, 1954.

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tax structure, low interest rates and big government deficits. Should the situation get out of hand, then a mere reversal of policy will impose down-draft dampers. When prices begin to surge upward certain goods become more desirable. People want to hedge against unknown contingencies and they begin to purchase durable commodities, real estate, even old postage stamps. Soon holders of such assets acquire a vested interest in inflation. A speculative psychology comes to the forefront and people are more concerned with rising values *per se* rather than with more basic productive processes. Their attitude is that it is better to make money through price changes rather than earn one's keep by anxious sweat. Inflation becomes respectable, for it maintains purchasing power. It reduces strain between groups and softens social conflict. Ultimately, it becomes the economic ideology of a mindless mass society.

This may seem to contradict the general understanding of Keynesian analysis, which in the thirties had set forth a theory of capitalist stagnation. According to this thesis, capitalism would continue to suffer a depressed economy because of the decline of the rate of population growth, the passing of the frontier, the exhaustion of natural resources and the drop in the rate of profit. All this appears old-fashioned now for, it is argued, all the indices of industrial production and economic activity make these propositions invalid. Yet what has happened is that a vast government intervention has altered the situation without in the least undermining the older notions. Stagnation has been replaced by a permanent war economy. The anticipated beneficent price rise was attained largely through the needs of a growing military élite. In reality, say the Keynesians in implicit fashion, there is no conflict between capitalist stagnation and the theory of gently rising prices. One is merely the cure of the other; it is as patently improper to accuse them of inconsistency as it is improper to charge a man with inconsistency when he wears an overcoat in winter and Bermuda shorts in summer.

II

To place Keynesian economics in the main stream of economic thought requires some explanation of the so-called "real" versus monetary analysis. In the former, economic propositions are derived solely from decisions based on the relations between men and goods. Money, it is argued, enters into a system of economic equations only as an accounting device or as a means of facilitating transactions. Normally, the monetary factor has no effect on economic situations since the modern economy is nothing more than an extension of a barter system. This makes money an opaque veil which must be withdrawn if we are to learn the actual ratios of exchange that lie behind money prices. Income is defined as the flow of goods and services in exchange for labor, while saving is the actual accumulation of productive factors and their conversion into physical equipment. Real analysis emphasizes the non-monetary aspects of economic behavior.

This approach accounted for Say's famous Law of Markets, in which every supply was supposed to create its own demand, making general

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overproduction a logical impossibility. Say admitted that specific commodities might be overproduced, but a general glut in the sense of a general depression was unthinkable, for the very process of production created the required *effective* demand necessary to absorb total output. There was an implied faith that the total *amount* of the national income would always be predetermined at full employment levels. This revealed a lack of understanding of demand as a flow of income which might have breaks and leakages so that some part of output would conceivably fail to be taken up. For this, an analysis was necessary that would not avoid making money a significant factor in the economic system.

Monetary analysis denies that money is an illusion. It insists rather that it is the central feature of economic behavior. A laborer works for money wages; a capitalist seeks money profits; and our society has developed money institutions in which the art of making more money becomes basic. In fact, the economic system develops a set of counting-house attitudes which are extremely important elements in the drives that dominate contemporary behavior. Money is not only the measure of economic activity but the very force that gives rise to the phenomenon that it purports to measure, and as both Wesley Mitchell and Joseph Schumpeter acknowledged, it is a rationalizing device which establishes behavior patterns in a specific and historically conditioned manner.

Such an analysis emphasizes that money is the compass by which individuals must today steer. As mathematical economists are wont to say, it is a parameter or a fixed variable that provides the matrix in which specific economic forms take shape. This means simply enough that economic life under capitalism is a matter of making and spending money and that it is possible to derive from this proposition all that need be said about economics as a means of increasing the national welfare. But since money is the only credential required to obtain consumer goods, there is no guarantee that people will be rewarded according to the time-honored theory of marginal productivity. The use of money becomes complex and irrational: it may even be used as an instrument of coercion. Above all, it is never the neutral phenomenon that so-called real analysis says it is. The relationships between men and goods that are expressed in monetary form acquire a life and importance of their own which cannot be obscured by the veil that classical economists draped over it.*

One of the important results of the monetary approach was the growth of the so-called macroeconomic technique in economic thinking. The realization that money is significant enabled economists to reduce a complex image of the economic system to a few social aggregates—income, saving, investment, consumption. These became homogeneous concepts, easy to handle in an analytical scheme, as was evident in the doctrinal system constructed by Keynes wherein he tried to relate the

* A further advantage accrues from this approach in that it enables one to bring together sociological and psychological criteria as well as economic in analyzing a given situation.

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behavior of individuals and firms to such aggregates through a number of recondite concepts: these were the now famous "marginal propensity to consume," "liquidity preference" and "the marginal efficiency of capital."

Keynes then went on to analyze the motives for holding money. These were basic to the idea of liquidity preference, an important component in his system. Money, he said, was held to facilitate transactions, to engage in speculation or for precautionary reasons. The first arises from the fact that income receipts are discontinuous, while expenditures are continuous, thus creating a need for holding some cash in order to meet obligations. The transactions motive itself was divided into demand created by consumers, which in turn depended on the average interval between pay periods and the size of the national income, and business requirements for the payment of wages and purchase of raw materials. The precautionary motive was merely a matter of saving for the proverbial rainy day. The third motive was described by Keynes at great length and was considered by him to be very important in an advanced capitalist economy. Since Keynes was so preoccupied with speculation, his emphasis was understandable.

With money so institutionalized, manipulation to compensate for disturbances was quite possible, said Keynes. He drew the implication that accumulation and thrift could lead to impoverishment. To his critics this was outrageous. He suggested further that "socialized" investment might be the vehicle for attaining a high level of employment. This, too, might be done through monetary stimulation. However, it seems especially germane to inquire whether the permanent war economy through which we are currently living is not an embodiment in a refined form of "socialized investment," for wherein but a garrisoned society does the state organize investment so thoroughly? The corollary that some writers have drawn seems not unreasonable: Keynesian theory could work as well in a totalitarian society as in a democratic one, for this system of economics is by itself entirely neutral. While it combined policy with economics, Keynesianism failed to create a true political economy. By employing aggregate thinking it ran the risk of creating a merely mechanical theory which would suggest that some kind of socialized gadgetry would be sufficient to attain economic change, whether in depression or prosperity. Unfortunately, society does not function that way, for political economy in the proper sense must account for rationality and human judgment. For an understanding of the underlying character of a society it appeared necessary to go beyond this brand of contemporary economics.

III

The basic element in the Keynesian system was the concern with effective demand. Keynes was exercised by the problem of how much people intend to spend, since it was this that determined the level of consumption and investment. Intentions to spend were trans-

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lated into aggregate demand, a psychological rather than a technological factor. Should aggregate demand, said Keynes, fall below what business men expected and thereby fail to cover costs of production, there would be cutbacks resulting in unemployment. On the other hand, should aggregate demand exceed expectations, production would be stimulated. That level of aggregate demand which led to an equilibrium was the *effective* balance. This had two facets: it represented actual consumer expenditure and it was also income to the factors of production. In other words, it was the national income which when seen from Keynes' view was the determining factor in the creation of employment.

Keynes then went on to analyze that aspect of effective demand which he described as the *propensity to consume.** He started with a simple proposition: consumption bore a certain relationship to income, changing in clearly defined ways as income itself changed. What this relationship would be depended not only on the amount of money earned but also on price levels, consumer tastes, tax policies, corporate depreciation plans, and the like. These objective factors were suffused by numerous subjective ones. True, the description of psychological motives here brought to economic thinking a freshness that was long overdue. But Keynes, unfortunately, concerned himself only with short-run situations. He analyzed only those " . . . psychological characteristics of human nature and those social practices and institutions which though not unalterable are unlikely to undergo a material change over a short period of time . . . " Long run alterations he left to others.

The relation of consumption to income was described as follows: consumption increases as income increases, but not as rapidly. This implied, among other things, that spending habits are fairly stable while saving is done by upper income groups, a not unreasonable surmise. From this was derived the *schedule* of the propensity to consume, a purely mental construct which tabulated the quantities that persons would buy at certain prices. Such a schedule, of course, would have to exhibit multidimensional features, for consumption habits are determined not by income alone. And the mere matter of choice which is involved in such a schedule suggests the problem of measuring comparability, something that most psychologists doubt is possible. Furthermore, some economists have questioned the statement that the proportion of consumption declines as income increases, contending that a constant share of income is consumed at all levels. Others have said that savings habits are independent of income. All this represented some fairly rough shoals for Keynesian theory to traverse, yet it came through without too much damage. Interestingly enough, a fantastic amount of empirical research was stimulated in an effort to discover in just what ways consumption did depend upon income. Factors of time and place were introduced in order to ascertain which income patterns

* Much has been written of this concept: a considerable technical literature now exists with which we cannot concern ourselves here. See bibliography and references in *The New Economics* edited by Seymour E. Harris, 1947.

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were meaningful. Yet most of these studies continued to show the age-old lop-sided distribution.*

The connection of income to employment was inescapable. Classical theory had described wages as the price paid for labor and like all prices it was subject to ordinary market influences. When such a price failed to move with the freedom assured it by Smith's unseen hand, then it must be due, it was thought, to frictions, immobility, or even trade unions. Rapid adjustment to market change was the desired goal, since this was the way in which unemployment could be eliminated. That this suggested wage cutting and less income did not occur to the theorists. Keynes rejected the whole approach out of hand. It was, he intimated, more a mode of ancestral worship than economic analysis.

To understand the situation, he argued, we must begin with an over-all view of the entire economy. Total employment is created by expected total proceeds from forthcoming production. This was *aggregate demand.* The cost of producing total output was called *aggregate supply.* Now, it should be clear that total expected proceeds must cover costs, if production is to occur. Since employment is derived from output, each supply price will give rise to a particular level of employment. This suggested that economic equilibrium was entirely possible even under conditions of mass unemployment. When employment does increase, costs can conceivably match receipts at levels below full employment. This occurs whenever anticipated receipts are insufficient to call forth a large enough output. Keynes focused his sights on the demand side of this relationship, since he felt that it required greater attention. Supply was basically a technical matter dependent on available resources, machines and manpower skills. It was only in inflationary conditions, as in wartime, that interest centered on the supply side, for then balance could be maintained only by breaking through bottlenecks.

To this apparatus Keynes added the notion of the *multiplier,* an idea borrowed from R. F. Kahn who had traced the effect of an increase in investment on employment. Keynes converted this into an income multiplier designed to show the relationship of a small increase of investment to increases in income. The total increase in income, he said, resulting from an initial expenditure would be far greater than

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* It is frequently contended today that the pattern of income distribution assumes a diamond shape, thus proving that there are fewer rich, fewer poor and many more middle class persons. The latter are supposedly in the $4,000-$10,000 bulge. But all such statistics are based on *family* income; it is sometimes admitted, as *Fortune* recently did, that most of the families in the lower range of this bulge have more than one wage earner. Should such families revert to single wage earner status, they would drop into the below-$4,000 class. While family income is a useful market research tool, it fails to reveal the entire story. Since marginal productivity theory presupposes single units of capital and labor, it would not be remiss for economists to consider the suggestion that a better picture of income distribution might be secured with the individual as a basis. The pertinent data are instructive: in 1941 there were 17.8 million families with an extra wage earner and another 10.9 million families with two or more. In 1953 the numbers were 21.5 million and 17.1 million respectively.

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would be ordinarily supposed, since a snow-balling effect would ensue.* The multiplier mechanism suggested that heavy spending—by government, business or consumers—would have a salutary effect on the national income. However, it does have an outer limit set by several leakages in the system, such as debt cancellation, hoarding, taxes and imports (since the latter do not provide domestic employment). There is also a relationship between the multiplier and consumption, or more precisely, the "marginal propensity to consume" (defined as that part of added income which is consumed rather than saved) which assumes a certain stability in consumer behavior, a notion that some economists have denied. It has been argued that while resistance to cutting consumption is often evinced in an economic downturn, the upswing phase of the business cycle has generally shown an evenly proportionate variation between income and consumption. The conclusion then is that the economy does not necessarily stumble over its own feet: causes external to the system must be sought for explanations of cyclical change. However, the implication that over-all spending patterns are the same for all income groups must be rejected. A more cogent criticism is that Keynes' consumption-income relation fails to account for corporate income, the earning and spending of which bear no visible relationship to the psychological habits of consumers. Furthermore, it is possible that the character of the multiplier is itself a variable the values of which shift with the cycle. If this were so it would no longer be possible to consider it a causal factor.

Despite these strictures, the multiplier concept successfully called attention to investment as the major dynamic element in the economy, for not only did it indicate the direct creation of employment but it revealed that income was generated throughout the system like a stone causing ripples in a lake. In this context, investment could only mean newly constructed physical assets, not the mere purchase of securities. But such investment is undertaken under capitalism only if it yields a profit equal to at least the next best alternative. If the capitalist must go to the money market for funds, then it is clear that earnings on new capital cannot fall below the going interest rate on loans. The prospective net yield resulting from this relationship was called the *marginal efficiency of capital.*

The main drift of the argument here is that *prospective* yield becomes the decisive factor in influencing the rate of investment. This introduces a broad range of questions raised by the theory of expectations and anticipations. Estimations of profitability, however, may be related not to the actual embodied historical cost of assets but to their replacement cost, a notion which is largely of an "iffy" character. In this way the marginal efficiency of capital brings psychology to the forefront of economic theory. The strength of business men's convictions about the future becomes crucial. Keynes observed that these reac-

* However, this was not an especially new idea: it could be found in the writings of the famous Russian economist, Tugan-Baranovsky, as well as in Knut Wicksell, the Swedish economist.

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tions had been quite unstable in the past, inducing rather violent fluctuations in the demand for investment goods. Business gyrations arose too from the fact, previously stated in an explicit way only by Marx, that the largest part of investment is made by a small group which does not absorb the bulk of consumer goods. The most fruitful answer to the question of how capitalism functions seemed to lie in this disparity.

Keynes made much of the argument that there was a tendency for profitability to decline as the market for any given capital good filled up. This was his "declining marginal efficiency of capital" and he was referring to nothing less than the familiar falling rate of profit, a proposition that economists from Adam Smith to Marx acknowledged as quite valid. Keynes' conception, which attributed this tendency to an excessive supply of capital, is in many respects fairly close to the Marxian idea. Increases in investment bring forth new capital goods which compete with old equipment, while expanded output forces prices down, thus reducing anticipated yields. This can continue so long as the rate of interest remains below the marginal efficiency of capital. In fact, should interest rates fall to zero, a point may be reached where capital would continue to be created until it is no longer "scarce." However, increases in population, expansion of territory and technological improvements prevent such contingencies.

During the first five decades of the 20th century, geographic expansion and population growth slowed down, while technology emphasized capital saving devices. The result was a number of short, sudden spurts of capital formation which failed to take into account long-run social needs. The implication that society could afford to allow private expectations to determine the required investment level was drawn by Keynes as well as by his chief American disciple, Alvin Hansen. In 1938 Keynes thought that there should be a Board of Public Investment which would influence the course of the business cycle by its decisions. But he did not want government domination; he insisted that there would still be a place in such a setup for private capitalists to seek unexplored avenues. The Board would merely specify the total amount of investment without directly allocating resources. His thinking here, though, seems somewhat woolly; it is an interesting question how such "socialized" investment policies could operate without a certain amount of central direction.*

Keynes' original conception of the dynamics of capitalist motion placed a good deal of emphasis on the rate of interest. The relationship between the marginal efficiency of capital and interest underscored that idea. Since interest was a "price," the critical determinants were supply and demand, as in the case of all prices. But where ordinary theory spoke of the balance of capital productivity and capital supply, Keynes related the demand element to the desire for cash (liquidity preference) and supply to the amount of money in circulation.

* Both Barbara Wootton and Sir William Beveridge quickly discovered that economic planning for investment necessitated control from a center. See Beveridge's *Full Employment in a Free Society* and Wootton's *Plan or No Plan.*

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Keynes' interest theory, however, failed to account for investment made by corporations out of accumulated reserves, a situation in which the rate of interest is at best but a fictional yardstick. Furthermore, the reasoning at this point seems somewhat dubious, since relating the rate of interest to liquidity preference overlooked the fact that the latter itself depended in large measure on income. This resulted in some circularity: interest affected investment which in turn determined income. Yet, curiously enough, elimination of the rate of interest as a significant factor in no way seemed to upset the Keynesian system. It is quite possible to study the capitalist economy along the lines suggested by Keynes without paying much attention to the rate of interest, just as it is possible to follow Marx's analysis of circulation without recourse to the labor theory of value.*

IV

The Keynesian system did not, of course, go unchallenged. Arthur F. Burns, chief economic advisor to the Eisenhower administration, has in one of his rare theoretical moments leveled severe attacks on it.** He has questioned whether Keynes really provided enough information to enable governments to deal with cyclical situations. Such a feeling might be ascribed to Burns' inordinate passion for facts and his sharp rejection of theory. Burns objected also to the aggregate approach on the ground that not all firms act alike; windfall profits, he insisted, would upset the Keynesian equilibrium; the consumption function does not assume the shape ascribed to it in the *General Theory;* there is no guarantee that spending would always revive dormant economic life; and the trouble with Keynesian economic thought, concluded Burns, was that it employed a mechanical approach that failed utterly to comprehend the real turbulence of the business world. But all this merely revealed a thoroughgoing misunderstanding of the aim of theoretical discourse; Mr. Burns would have quarrelled as much with Ricardo or Marshall as he does with Keynes.

A more serious criticism is the contention that Keynes did not really advance much beyond classical theory. It has been demonstrated that the latter's picture of a pleasant economic equilibrium is applicable only to periods of full employment, and now that such a condition has been more or less attained, classical analysis becomes just as useful as any other. Keynesian theory, continues the argument, is but a special instance of the more general Marshallian version: the new economics has no particular relevance for current prosperity conditions. All that Keynes did, said one economist, was to establish diplomatic relations between standard theory and the business cycle.

Keynes was also charged with having arbitrarily selected his variables and constants which are the really critical elements in any theory.

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* See Joan Robinson, *An Essay on Marxian Economics* and Ladislaus von Bortkiewicz, *Value and Price in the Marxian System,* the latter reprinted in *International Economic Papers,* Vol. 2.

** See Arthur F. Burns, *The Frontiers of Economic Knowledge,* 1954.

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Had he chosen, for example, to cast his analysis in terms of the propensity to save rather than consumption, he might not have acquired so many followers. Formulating the *General Theory* along the lines that he did allowed him to adapt his thinking to contemporary political and social changes. His formula permitted economists to hold on to their old notions while taking a new look at the way capitalism really functioned. This was a most comfortable procedure and many of his co-workers were very grateful. But they all failed to recognize, including the master himself, that the mores of our society have created a dichotomy between *peacetime* full employment and the system of free enterprise. Full employment was possible only where government spending reached astronomic magnitudes. There was a certain amount of doubt in some quarters that free enterprise *per se* could establish the necessary requirements for maximum utilization of economic resources without resorting to the stimulus of war.

It was Marx, of course, who contended that capitalism could not possibly function without periodically grinding its gears. The gap between standard theory and Marx has always seemed unbridgeable. Marx, who viewed capitalism as a passing phase in history, sought to expose its failings; classical doctrine insisted that capitalism was solid and permanent. Marx said that interest and profits were merely divisions of exploitative spoils; the classicists called them rewards for astuteness and abstinence. Yet the modifications that Keynes introduced into received economics revealed the common roots of both doctrines. Keynes showed that it was possible to discuss economic problems with labor as the major or even sole factor of production. He thought that capitalism, unless revived, would founder entirely and when a neo-Keynesian remarks that the tragedy of investment is that it leads to crises that are themselves useful he comes dangerously close to the Marxian conception. Keynes' rejection of Say's theory of markets and his underscoring of the lack of automatism in economics may also be found in Marx. In fact, with but a few shifts in definition and some alteration in variables, it is possible to bring Marxian theory quite close to Keynes. For example, the concept of the declining rate of profit may be visualized as the objective manifestation of the declining marginal efficiency of capital. Moreover, if the theory of prices adumbrated by Marx in Vol. III of *Capital* were modified in the fashion of von Bortkiewicz* it would not take much adjustment to incorporate it into the main body of economic theory. Difficulties arise when Marx analyzes the total supply of capital and its rate of profit. Here Marx's objective definition of capital appears at odds with Keynes' monetary motivation. But Keynes did emphasize the fact that accumulation did

* See L. von Bortkiewicz in *International Economic Papers,* Vol. 2. Dudley Dillard, a noted Keynes expert, asserts that there is a greater intellectual kinship between Keynes and Proudhon than between Keynes and Marx. Dillard points to the similarities in their social reform program, the monetary approach, attitudes toward the "rentiers" and their general optimism concerning the effectiveness of their respective theories. See *Journal of Economic History,* May 1942.

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not depend on saving alone but was an active, sometimes creative, sometimes disturbing, process penetrating all aspects of the economy.

Perhaps the closest affinity in the two systems is to be found in the theory of capitalist circulation which Marx discussed so profoundly in his second volume of *Capital.* The Keynesian version sees breakdown caused by variations in the inducement to invest. Since the latter depends on profits, the actual limit to investment ultimately becomes the saving-consumption relation. In Marx it is the rate of saving out of surplus value that governs investment: the pace is set by the competitive urge to beat down all rivals. Effective demand as a consideration in determining investment patterns does not enter the Marxian system at all, so that basically unemployment and crises are due to an insufficiency of capital. In Marx, the depression must await further accumulation before renewed activity can take place. This, however, is what economists today describe as structural unemployment, a quite different kind from that which occurs when there is merely a failure in demand. The latter is what happened in the Thirties and it is the likeliest type of unemployment in modern capitalism.

The most striking parallel is that breakdown results from internal insufficiencies.* At this point, Keynes and Marx differed only in their use of aggregates. Marx employed the categories of producers and consumers goods with a three-fold division of value into constant, variable and surplus cutting across both groups. This made it possible for a table of value to be distributed among producer and consumer industries. Each value portion thus represented not only a certain type of good but a cost and demand item as well. From this construction it was possible to work out a circular flow which could then be converted without much logical hazard into Keynesian categories.**

It can be argued that this procedure would demonstrate only formal similarities. Marxians insist that the variables employed in their economic theorizing are implicit in the system itself, whereas Keynes' basic elements are derived from non-economic psychological factors. Yet it is extraordinary that, despite an antipathetic outlook, Keynes was able to develop a vision of capitalism the mechanics of which approximated Marx's. When Marx spoke of the excess of surplus value over capitalists' consumption as being limited by the expenditure for new producers goods and foreign investment, he comes close to the Keynesian view, for here investment is seen as a purchase without a sale and saving as a sale without a purchase. That is to say, in neither system were automatic adjustments a reality. While he ignored "monetary" analysis, Marx did concede that the amount of money in circulation was affected by business habits as well as prices. As for interest rates, Marx attached much less importance to them than did Keynes: interest was nothing more than that part of surplus value subject to bargaining between

* See Joan Robinson, *ibid.*

** For example, the portion of surplus value used to purchase additional producers goods can be equated to Keynes' entrepreneurial transactions. See S. Tsuru in *Post Keynesian Economics.*

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capitalists. In the Keynesian system, interest is important where borrowing is involved. Otherwise, it is quite possible to omit it. For both, productive techniques were quite significant: to Keynes long run investment decisions depended on productivity, a notion not entirely alien to Marx. Both also recognized that the contradiction, to employ the Marxian term, between consumption and production lay at the root of economic crises. Consumption is limited by the kind of income distribution a society develops. This restricts profitability and investment. Counterbalancing factors are the growth of new industries and the compulsion to expand outwardly. An additional countervailing element that both writers would have surely acknowledged is the permanent war economy.*

But Marx wanted to go beyond the technical economic variables to what he conceived to be underlying social relations. Searching for the forces that led to the creation of value, he was compelled to conclude that the crucial relationships could be expressed quantitatively through commodity exchange. Yet, in this search, one of the most exciting in the history of economic thought, he overlooked the patent fact that such commodity transactions acquire an independent reality. The failure to recognize this made the Marxian model essentially a classical one with an unexpected moral twist, one that was rejected by later economists. Furthermore, Marx made his schema so involved and abstract that all too often his most trenchant insights were lost.

The Keynesian aggregate analysis, on the other hand, exhibits a simple neutrality that successfully evades the charge of moralizing. The chief characteristic of Keynes' major idea, the national income, is the fact that its basic analytical techniques are applicable to all sorts of economic systems. When Keynes pointed out that investment implied payments to the factors of production without necessarily bringing goods to market he was offering an operational as well as an empirical concept. The drawback in the original version as presented in the *General Theory* was his failure to take after-effects into account, so that it was possible for him to offer, half in jest, pyramid building as a prescription for depression.

Despite its seemingly static character, the Keynesian system lends itself to all sorts of dynamical modification. It can be made quite complex without damaging its inherent logic. The Marxian aggregates, on the other hand, lack operational character and consequently do not

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* In an article on war finance, written in July 1940 especially for the *New Republic* Keynes said: "It is, it seems, politically impossible for a capitalist democracy to organize expenditure on the scale necessary to make the grand experiment which would prove my case—except in war conditions . . . If the United States takes seriously the material and economic side of the defense of civilization and steels itself to a vast dissipation of resources in the preparation of arms, it will learn its strength—and learn it as it can never learn it otherwise; learn a lesson that can be turned to account afterward to reconstruct a world which will understand the first principles governing the production of wealth . . . War preparation, so far from requiring a sacrifice, will be the stimulus, which neither victory nor defeat of the New Deal could give you to greater individual consumption and a higher standard of life . . ."

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lend themselves easily to empirical verification. They are, in a sense, pure concepts and like the Ricardian categories from which they derived much of their form, they are not measurable.

Objection has been voiced to Keynes' use of *net* national income as the fundamental idea in economic analysis. The argument was made, and not without some justification, that a net concept does not tell the entire story of total income flows, since it reveals only the final outcome without telling what has happened in the meantime. Keynes consequently could be charged with looking upon the economic process as just a process and nothing more: his followers have taken these strictures to heart and have made valiant efforts to achieve a more vital approach.* Marx's study of the relationships among constant capital, variable capital and surplus value was meant to answer just this question: it sought to determine how income was distributed amongst the various classes as a gross rather than a net flow, and in this respect Marx was analytically superior to Keynes.

There is no denying the fact that the influence of the *General Theory* has been enormous. All contemporary economic discourse, even that of Keynes' critics, is cast in its terms. His most intransigent opponents began to think as he did. Alvin Hansen and Arthur Pigou, Keynes' teacher, had greeted the general theory with anger and disdain, but it was not long before Hansen became the first apostle, while Pigou would later concede that his star pupil after all had been right. A school, in the true sociological sense was formed: there was an inner core of expert exegetes surrounded by an outer layer of popularizers. The experts—Harrod, Lerner, Hansen, Robinson—kept themselves busy filling in gaps and "dynamizing" the system like engineers tinkering with a strange new motor. Beyond these there grew up a large body of sympathizers who spoke the language of the master with wonderful glibness. As Schumpeter once remarked, this had happened before only to the Physiocrats and to Marx.

It was understandable that Keynes' ideas should have a striking influence on opinion regarding inherent tendencies in capitalism. These effects were especially noticeable in the United States during the early Thirties. While in England, knowledge of the sources of Keynes' ideas seemed to dull their brilliance, in this country the extraordinary unemployment in the midst of an astounding natural resource potential made almost everyone ready to accept Keynesian theory as the last word in economics, for it pointed to the behavior of people as the motivating force in the economic process. It was the actions of people, it seemed to say, rather than brutish, impersonal market drives that create the "stocks and flows" of economic analysis. The explanation of income and its movement could be framed in terms of persons and with such an approach it was even suggested that it might be possible to exercise

* K. K. Kurihara, *ibid.* However, for a strictly orthodox Marxian treatment of Keynes (in a quasi-Stalinoid fashion) see *Science and Society*, Spring 1955. This article demonstrates to the author's satisfaction that neither Keynes nor Marx would have known what the other was talking about.

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the kind of control that would dispose of the disheartening cyclical variations to which capitalism so often gave rise. If this belief were correct then economic relationships could be defined as the outcome of interpersonal and group relationships; governmental action could be effectively utilized to modify and influence the behavior of the important economic groups—certain business men, trade unions and even consumers. The social group, in other words, might be the proper vehicle for the operation of all the Keynesian "propensities".

Keynesian economics thus represented an attempt to create an acceptable *political* economy at a time when people wanted action as well as analysis. This lent to the *General Theory* an irresistible attraction. The need to do things in a depression pointed to questions of policy: this was the direction in which Keynes moved and he was able to give intellectual expression to both despair and hopefulness, while his use of aggregates and global figures seemed to make everything disarmingly simple. But this was a mechanical simplicity in which talk about the kind of "built-in stabilizers" that would absolve all of us of ultimate responsibility replaced the need to comprehend and grasp the complex, vibrant and all too often turbulent realities of economic activity. The simple fact of the matter was that Keynes' economics failed to achieve the status of a true political economy. As was suggested above, there was simply too much gadgetry embodied in it, too much "engineering" and inadequate concern for the underlying social realities of economic tension. The entire system was so "neutral" that it could easily serve as a convenient theoretical justification (particularly as it related to the social control of investment) for a totalitarian movement seeking to extend the *status quo* by state action. Such a use of this theory could only happen because the human and the political did not penetrate the economic in Keynes' thinking. For all his consideration of cash balances, liquidity references, multiplier effects and consumption functions, one does not always have the feeling that these are categories of human behavior. All too often, the social groups that are *implied* by Keynesian economics merely comprise a number of individuals who react in the economy as a result of certain none-too-well defined expectations or because of speculative moods or as a result of some action undertaken by the central bank. Moreover, none of these groups ever seems to exhibit any identifiable social interest beyond the course of action prescribed for them by the theory. Like the aggregates, they mean something only in the *mass*. And the major concern, as with the Classicists, was always with economic equilibrium. This ultimately focused attention on the level of economic values and their flows rather than on origins and consequently lead to an overweening interest in the mere mechanics of the economy. Had Keynes acknowledged the appropriateness of the political and social he might, for example, have been less hasty to suggest that a constant rise in prices would achieve the millennium and he would not have fostered the view that social engineering could dispense with the need for a truly rigorous reevaluation of capitalist society.

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This, in the final analysis, reveals Keynes as essentially a conservative thinker.* His social philosophy was grounded in a belief in unremitting economic endeavor, while leadership was for him a function of the chosen few. Yet he did not reject reform: social evils were an abomination not to be tolerated in his England. Change could best be attained by careful study and a program of gradualism. Improving the lot of the poor was simply something that all Englishmen should advocate because they were English. National income ought to be distributed in a way that would provide for the unfortunate, but absolute equality was completely undesirable. Although the profit motive might have sordid implications, state enterprise was most impractical. There is little doubt that when we get down to the root of the matter Keynes firmly sustained the principle of private enterprise. Perhaps that is why he became a social tinkerer and a man of principled expediency.

* In the same *New Republic* article mentioned above Keynes wondered why politics in peacetime impeded the attainment of the kind of prosperous conditions that could be established through wartime production. He urged that partisanship be replaced by moderation. Reformers, he said, " . . . must believe that it is worthwhile to concede a great deal to preserve that decentralization of decision and of power which is the prime virtue of the old individualism. They must zealously protect the variously woven fabric of society, even when this means that some abuses must be spared."

When in Rome . . .

The methods you have pursued, my dear Pliny, in sifting the cases of those denounced to you as Christians is extremely proper . . . No search should be made for these people; when they are denounced and found guilty they must be punished; with the restriction, however, that when the party denies himself to be a Christian, and shall give proof that he is not (by adoring our Gods) he shall be pardoned . . . Informations without the accuser's name subscribed must not be admitted in evidence against anyone, as it is introducing a very dangerous precedent, and by no means agreeable to the spirit of the age.

—From a letter of the Emperor Trajan to Pliny

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SILONE AND THE RADICAL CONSCIENCE

Irving Howe

(The following article is part of a much longer chapter from a forthcoming book on "The Political Novel," to be published by Horizon Press in 1956. *It does not propose a full analysis of Silone's writings, but tries to present him in a certain intellectual-literary tradition.)*

In Ignazio Silone's first novel, *Fontamara,* the image of the unity of worker and peasant, which had achieved a symbolic elevation in Trotsky's *History of the Russian Revolution,* appears in a state of decomposition, its two parts split into figures of hostility. One of the few modern novels that has the genuine quality of a folk tale, or perhaps better, a comic fable, *Fontamara* tells the story of a peasant village in the Abruzzi resisting in its pathetic way the onthrusts of the Mussolini regime. To the peasants, the political problem first presents itself as one of city against country, town against village—and they are not entirely wrong, for they, the peasants, are at the very bottom, suffering the whole weight of Italian society. Simple but not simple-minded, unable to generalize very well from their suffering yet aware that they must learn to, they show a deep insight, through their complicated jokes and sly stories, into the nature of the social hierarchy. When a minor government flunkey, the Hon. Pelino, comes to gather their signatures for a petition that, as it happens, has not yet been composed, one of the peasants tells him a marvelous little fable:

> "At the head of everything is God, Lord of Heaven.
> After him comes Prince Torlonia, lord of the earth.
> Then comes Prince Torlonia's armed guards.
> Then comes Prince Torlonia's armed guards' dogs.
> Then nothing at all. Then nothing at all. Then nothing at all.
> Then come the peasants. And that's all."
> "And the authorities, where do they come in?" (asks the Hon. Pelino.)
> Ponzio Pilato interrupted to explain that the authorities were divided between the third and fourth categories, according to the pay. The fourth category (that of the dogs) was a very large one.

From their bloody experience the peasants must learn that they need the help of the town, and one way of reading *Fontamara* is as a

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series of explorations into, or encounters with, the town where the peasants try to discover their true allies—not the priest, who is corrupt and bloated; not the old landowners, who are being squeezed by Mussolini's agents yet remain as much as ever the enemies of the peasants; not the liberal lawyer, Don Circostanza, who betrays them with his windy rhetoric. Only when the most violent of the peasants, Berardo—it is significant that he owns no land and is therefore free from the conservative inclinations of even those peasants who have nothing more than a strip of rock or sand—only when he goes to Rome does he meet, after a series of tragi-comic blunders, the agent of the revolutionary underground. At the end of the novel, a union has been achieved—hesitant, not fully understood and quickly broken—between peasant and worker. The underground revolutionary brings to the peasants a miniature printing-press, a product of urban technology, and the peasants print one issue of a little paper called *What Is To Be Done?* As one of them explains with a truly masterful grasp of political method, the question must be asked again and again, after each statement of their plight: *They have taken away our water.* What is to be done? *The priests won't bury our dead.* What is to be done? *They rape our women in the name of the law.* What is to be done? *Don Circostanza is a bastard.* What is to be done?

The question echoes, not accidentally, the title of Lenin's famous pamphlet, in which he first outlined his plan for a disciplined revolutionary party; nor is it an accident that both Lenin's pamphlet and the paper of Silone's peasants are written in times of extreme reaction. For *Fontamara* is the one important work of modern fiction that fully absorbs the Marxist outlook on the level of myth or legend; the one work of modern fiction in which the Marxist categories seem organic and "natural," not in the sense that they are part of the peasant heritage or arise spontaneously in the peasant imagination, but in the sense that the whole weight of the peasant experience, at least as it takes form in this book, requires an acceptance of these categories. What makes *Fontamara* so poignant as a political legend—despite the apparent failures, upon occasion, of Silone's language to equal in richness his gift for anecdote—is that he is a *patient* writer, one who has the most acute sense of the difference between what is and what he wishes. The peasants are shown in their non-political actuality and the political actuality is shown as it moves in upon them, threatening to starve and destroy them; Silone does not assume the desired relationship between the two, though he shows the possibilities for a movement into that relationship; the book is both concrete—wonderfully concrete—in its steady view of peasant life, and abstract—a brilliant paradigm—in its placing of peasant life in the larger social scheme. The political

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theories behind the book resemble the lines signifying longitude and latitude on a map; they are not the reality, not the mountains and plains and oceans; but they are indispensable for locating oneself; they are what give the geography of society meaning and perspective.

FONTAMARA ends in defeat yet it exudes revolutionary hope and *elan*. Silone's next novel, *Bread and Wine,* is entirely different in tone: defeat is now final, the period of underground struggle at an end, and all that remains is resignation, despair and obeisance before authority. The novel's hero, Pietro Spina, who partly reflects the opinions of his creator, is a revolutionary leader who from exile has returned to the peasant areas of his native Abruzzi in order to reestablish ties with his people and see whether his Marxist theories will hold up in experience. As he wanders about the countryside, the sick and hunted Spina gradually abandons his Marxism, but not his social rebelliousness: the priest's frock that he has adopted as a disguise begins to be more than disguise: he must fulfill the responsibilities of his public role or what appear to be his public role, and must adjust his private emotions to this necessity: he becomes or aspires to become, a revolutionary Christian saint. He asks—in the words of Albert Camus—"is it possible to become a saint without believing in God? That is the sole concrete problem worth considering nowadays." But he sees even further than Camus: he dimly envisages, and in *The Seed Beneath the Snow* tries to realize, a fraternity beyond sainthood.

Soon after arriving in the Abruzzi, Spina decides that the usual kinds of political propaganda are irrelevant in a fascist country. People have been misled by slogans too long and too often; they instinctively distrust all phrases. To refute the government propaganda is pointless since no one, least of all its authors, believes it. People know the truth well enough; it is courage and energy that they lack, not understanding; they are not ready to sacrifice themselves. Spina feels that what is now needed is not programs, even the best Marxist programs, but examples, a pilgrimage of deeds: men must be healed, they must be stirred to heroism rather than exhorted and converted.

Before coming to these conclusions Spina had already been uneasy about his political allegiance: "Has not truth, for me, become party truth? . . . Have not party interests ended by deadening all my discrimination between moral values?" The political doubts prompting these questions, together with his feeling that the Marxists in exile have lost touch with the realities of Italian life, lead Spina to the ethical ideal, the love concept, of primitive Christianity, which for him becomes "a Christianity denuded of all religion and all church control." Spina believes not in the resurrection of Jesus, only in his agony; Jesus figures for him entirely in *human* terms; in fact, the significance of Jesus is

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that he is the first, and perhaps the last, fully human being. To live as a Christian without the church means, for Spina, to shoulder the greatest possible insecurity before man and God. Spina rejects the duality between means and ends which is common to *all* political movements; unwilling to stake anything on the future, he insists that the only way to realize the good life, no matter what the circumstances, is to live it. "No word and no gesture can be more persuasive than the life and, if necessary, the death of a man who strives to be free, loyal, just, sincere, disinterested. A man who shows what a man can be."

Abstracting this political view from its context in the novel, as Silone virtually invites us to, we reach mixed conclusions about its value. Much of what Silone says is undoubtedly true: anyone trying to organize a political underground would have to demonstrate his worthiness not only as a leader but as a friend and confidant. But here we reach a difficulty. Once Silone's militant and saintly rebels acquired followers, they would have to be organized into some sort of movement, even if it claimed to be nonideological and were not called a party; and then that movement would be open to bureaucratic perils similar to those of the Marxist party which Spina has rejected—bureaucratic perils that would be particularly great in an atmosphere of saintly, even if not apocalyptic, Messianism. Has not something of the sort happened to Christianity itself, in its transition from primitive rebelliousness to a number of accredited institutions?

Silone has here come up against a central dilemma of all political action: the only certain way of preventing bureaucracy is to refrain from organization, but the refusal to organize with one's fellow men can lead only to acquiescence in detested power or to isolated and futile acts of martyrdom and terrorism. This is not, of course, to deny the validity of *specific* organizational rejections; it is merely to question Silone's belief, as it appears in *Bread and Wine,* that political goals can be reached without political organization.

It is, however, entirely to Silone's credit that he recognizes this dilemma and embodies it in the action of his book; he does not try to pry his way out of it with some rusty formula. One of his finest strokes in *Bread and Wine* is the scene in which Spina takes off his priestly frock—this occurs, significantly as soon as some possibility for political action appears. He takes off his priestly frock but we are not to suppose that his experience as Paolo Spada the false priest has not left a profound mark upon him. The duality between Spina and Spada—between the necessity for action and the necessity for contemplation, between the urge to power and the urge to purity—is reflected in Silone's own experience as novelist and political leader. Even after he wrote *The Seed Beneath the Snow,* a novel in which he exemplifies a kind of Christian

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passivity and mute fraternity, he continued to participate in the quite wordly Italian socialist movement. In his own practice as an Italian socialist, he has been forced to recognize that the vexatious problem of means and ends involves a constant tension between moral standards and practical behavior which can be resolved, if at all, only in practice.

YET IT IS precisely from these scrupulous examinations of conscience and commitment that so much of the impact of *Bread and Wine* derives; no other 20th century novelist has so fully conveyed the pathos behind the failure of socialism. *Bread and Wine* is a book of misery and doubt; it moves slowly, painfully, in a weary spiral that traces the spiritual and intellectual anguish of its hero. The characteristic turning of the political novelist to some apolitical temptation is, in Silone's case, a wistful search for the lost conditions of simple life where one may find the moral resources which politics can no longer yield. This pastoral theme, winding quietly through the book and reaching full development only in its sequel, *The Seed Beneath the Snow,* is not an easy one for the modern reader to take at face value: we are quick, and rightly so, to suspect programs for simplicity. But in Silone's work it acquires a unique validity; he knows peasant life intimately and, perhaps because he does not himself pretend to be a peasant, seldom stoops to pseudo-folk romanticizing; he is aware that a return to simplicity by a man like Spina must have its painful and ironic aspects; his turn to pastoral does not imply social resignation but is on the contrary buttressed by a still active sense of social rebelliousness; and most important of all, he employs the pastoral theme not to make a literal recommendation but to suggest, as a tentative metaphor, the still available potentialities of man.

Bread and Wine is a work of humility, unmarred by the adventurism or the occasional obsession with violence and death which disfigures the political novels of Malraux and Koestler. Whatever the ideological hesitations of Silone's novels, they remain faithful to the essential experience of modern Europe; and to the harsh milieu of political struggle they bring a cleansing freshness, a warmth of fraternity.

Perhaps as a sign of the drift of our age, Silone has gradually become one of the most isolated among modern writers. In the intellectual world of Italy he is seldom honored or admired. The memory of his refusal to accommodate himself to the fascist regime stirs feelings of bad conscience among literary men who were more flexible. His continued rejection of the traditional elegance of "literary" Italian confounds and disturbs the conventional critics. And his politics—for in some vague but indestructible way he remains a socialist, indifferent to party or dogma, yet utterly committed to the poor and the dispossessed —annoys those Italian writers who have tied themselves to a party ma-

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chine or the greater number who have remained in shelters of estheticism.

This last factor may also account for the decline of Silone's reputation in the United States. Those American intellectuals who have settled into social conformism or a featureless liberalism find in Silone's politics little more than sentimental nostalgia—or so they would persuade themselves; those who have turned to religion, whether it be the Catholic Church or the crisis theology of Protestantism, cannot help realizing, with a discomfort in proportion to their sensitiveness, that Silone's struggle for the ethic of primitive Christianity has nothing in common with the religious institutions and doctrines of the 20th century.

Yet each man, if he is to remain one, must go his own way; and Silone, in his clumsy uncertainty, his humorous irritability, his effort to speak without rhetoric or cant, has become a kind of moral hero for those of us who have been forced by history to put aside many of the dogmas of social radicalism but who remain faithful to the rebellious and fraternal impulse behind the dogmas. Silone's most recent novel, *A Handful of Blackberries,* has been received with some conventional appreciation and more conventional depreciation; neither of which is an adequate response. So deeply opposed is this book to the moods, the assumptions, the values of our time, so thoroughly is it imbued with the forgotten emotions of humaneness, that one can only assert that in years to come it will be looked back upon, if anything is, as a cultural and spiritual act helping to redeem a terrible age.

SIMPLY AS A NOVEL, *A Handful of Blackberries* has large, obvious faults: it reads more like a scenario than a realized work, it is occasionally flabby in structure and scratchy in style, it betrays a tone of great weariness (but from that weariness also comes a kind of greatness). One soon suspects that Silone, like many other novelists for whom writing is not merely portrayal but also a form of implicit prophecy, has become a little impatient with the mechanics of literature, the art of creating illusions. He has reached almost, but not quite, the position of the serious artist whose very seriousness causes him to shed the forms in which he has scored his greatest successes.

Yet these matters, though they have an intrinsic interest, are as nothing beside the overwhelming fact to which the novel testifies: that in an age of faithlessness Silone has kept faith. He has remained with the *cafoni,* the landless peasants in whose name he first began to write, and in this novel he tells us that, through the noise and the muddle of shifts in regimes and parties, nothing has changed for the peasants except the names of those who exploit them and the catch-words by which their exploitation is rationalized.

The surface action of the novel traces the disillusion of a young engineer who begins as a local leader of the Communist Party and

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comes gradually to realize that he must choose between the peasants who trust him and the party machine, which is as inhuman and repressive as the machine of the fascists. The inner action of the novel is a fable enriched with Silone's marvelous anecdotes—a fable about a trumpet by which the peasants, when their misery becomes unbearable, called one another together and which the Communist Party, in its false claim to be their spokesman, now wishes to appropriate. But while it may be true that the peasants are unable to act positively in their own behalf, they do have experience in resistance. They do not surrender the trumpet.

Once again, as in *Fontamara* and *Bread and Wine,* the city is counterposed to the country: neither can understand the other, and given the inequity of social arrangements it can hardly be avoided that the one should exploit the other. The life of the peasants remains as miserable, as buried in darkness, as ever before; neither the declaration of the republic nor the rise of the Communists has brought them material relief or a growth of consciousness. And so long as this remains true, Silone sees no reason to make his peace with the world as it is. Nor is he at all sentimental about the peasants, for the sardonic humor that twists through the books is often turned against their coarseness and gullibility. But they are his, by adoption of blood, and he remains hopeful, with a hopefulness that has nothing to do with optimism, that from the hidden inarticulate resources of the poor, which consist neither of intelligence nor nobility, but rather of a training in endurance and an education in ruse—that from all this something worthy of the human may yet emerge. When will the trumpet blow again? "How can I know?" answers the peasant Lazzaro. "It doesn't depend on me, you know. Maybe next year, or twenty or five hundred years from now." But the trumpet remains.

Silone's novels contain the most profound vision of what heroism can be in the modern world. Like Malraux, he appreciates the value of action, but he also realizes that in the age of totalitarianism it is possible for an heroic action to consist of nothing but stillness, that for Spina and many others there may never be the possibility of an outward or public gesture. If we compare his view of heroism with that of Hemingway, we see the difference between the feelings of a mature European and, if I may say so, an inexperienced American. For Hemingway heroism is always a visible trial, a test limited in time, symbolized in dramatic confrontations. For Silone, heroism is a condition of readiness, a talent for waiting, a gift for stubbornness; his is the heroism of tiredness. Hemingway's heroic virtues are realized in situations increasingly distant from the social world, among bullfighters and hunters and fishermen; Silone's heroic virtues pertain to people who live, as Bertolt Brecht has put it, in "the dark ages" of Europe, at the heart of our debacle.

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THE MASSES AND THE ELITE

Eugene Victor Walter

Political myths bury their undertakers. At the turn of this century, archaic modes of political thought had supposedly been laid to rest forever. The men of the Progressive movement thought of themselves as children of the Enlightenment, armed with instrumentalism and the scientific method, fated to conquer ignorance, break the tyranny of vested interests and usher in the shining future. Now that Progressivism has run its course and reached its time of troubles, it is no wonder that the specter of the counter-Enlightenment should return to haunt it, and that the ghosts of Burke, Maistre and company should be conjured up to mock it. In response, embattled liberals exhume their own departed heroes, and the air is filled with the noise of shades locked in combat, the wail of ghostly polemics, the rattle of old bones.

Among the images dredged up from the counter-Enlightenment is the picture of the body politic as a chaotic mass—"the swinish multitude," as Burke called it—seething with appetite. Today, this image of the masses-as-barbarians is a negative vision, formed in reaction to the Progressive vision of an emancipated and omnipotent People marching inexorably Forward. The involution of this image, made popular by writers as similar in mind and diverse in talent as Ortega y Gasset, Walter Lippmann and Peter Viereck, is based on an aristocratic conception of political life that sees humanity as divided into two species: the primitive formless mass, and the élite, which is evolved, refined and purified from the mass and, presumably, restrained by inner controls. When the masses are quiet, settled into the forms of piety and authority set up for them, they are human; when they are presumptuous and pass over these limits, they are barbarians. Just as the Enlightenment had assumed that social evil was derived from the tyranny of corrupt élites, the counter-Enlightenment had insisted (and, as now exhumed, continues to insist) that the source of pathology is the revolt of the masses.

The revival of the counter-Enlightenment would not have been possible if there were not a certain truth in its claims. Few would deny the significance in our time of explosive publics and the violence of mass movements. Even before the rise of totalitarian states, a number of nineteenth century writers had perceived the role in collective behavior of *ressentiment*: a state of enervating tension and grumbling, ruminating hostility that burns but does not act. In this condition, the longer action is delayed, the deeper smoldering hatred penetrates the soul, until it is released by a volcanic political explosion. In our day,

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political writers and social psychologists have demonstrated the significance of nameless anxiety and displaced aggression in the making of dictatorships and have shown how the latter feed on mass tensions and the despair of meaningless lives.

It is becoming increasingly common to hear talk of finding in the authority of an élite salvation from the mass (from "the element of terror in the destiny of our time," Ortega said). Walter Lippmann, persevering in his ideal of a Victorian political aristocracy, calls for strong executive leadership insulated from the pressures of the mass, and has a new vogue. Only a difference in degree separates Mr. Lippmann's conservatism from the kind of authoritarian politics that would substitute for the rule of an inept majority the rule of a competent élite. Unfortunately, the only judge of the élite's competence is the élite itself.

II

Today, the old problem of the judgment of governing groups is complicated by a clinical problem. Modern élites tend increasingly to be recruited from psychopaths of various kinds. The forces of the gutter that critics attribute to the crowd operate even more intensely in the élites themselves.

Alex Comfort, documenting his assertion with clinical and political evidence, argues that "the delinquencies of states arise at two levels—in the psychopathy of publics, and in the psychopathy of individuals expressing their own and their culture's aggression through the mechanism of power." The élites which cluster around positions of power in the modern state are increasingly recruited from those who have an unquenchable thirst for domination. On the one hand, power attracts abnormal personalities; on the other hand, no man is sufficiently normal to be entrusted safely with the power contained in the machinery of the modern state in any capacity—representative, expert or tyrant.

Today it is not possible to insulate the governors from the governed. Even—or perhaps especially—the dictatorships are systems in which the leader, his circle of lieutenants and the masses are locked in symbiotic interdependence. On the one hand, as Eric Hoffer points out, "The uncanny powers of a leader manifest themselves not so much in the hold he has on the masses as in his ability to dominate and bewitch a small group of able men." On the other hand, the leader and the masses are likewise dependent on each other.

Dictatorship, in a sense, is an involution of the tragedy of Prometheus. In myth Prometheus was mankind's benefactor, doomed to suffer eternally for his gifts. But the cry for the savior, which places the dictator in power, results in the enslavement and suffering of those who cry for salvation. The leader is seen by his public as endowed with magical powers that will rescue them from the terrible forces that threaten them, but in reality he is trapped by the same forces that enslave the crowds which give him power. He is the objectification of the dark and violent forces within the crowd—both its master and its mirror image.

The liberal democracies are no more immune from abnormal and delinquent leadership than are the dictatorships. There is little protection against executive misjudgment and outright abnormality. An administrative or military official can advise the

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government in the capacity of an expert and thereby disarm criticism. As Dr. Comfort observes, "A considerable number of war crimes have originated in pressures from the executive, often from a single member, backed by expert assurance that they were necessary, even though deplorable." Popular control over official behavior, though not the vogue these days and perhaps suffering from hardening of the institutions, is still the only means for civic liberty.

Fortunately for the survival of democratic institutions, mass inertia has sometimes been a blessing as well as a curse. If the executive and the legislature face a public that is thoroughly unreliable, these officials are likely to show a diplomatic caution similar to the prudence of states that know they cannot possibly resist aggression by arms. Under present conditions, where war is incompatible with individual and collective survival, such an attitude may be considered a valuable safeguard.

However, to those who are beginning to follow the road to demophobia, one might pose a question originally raised by the authors of *The Federalist* (a document cherished by conservatives):

> What are we to say to the men who profess the most flaming zeal for republican government, yet boldly impeach the fundamental principle of it; who pretend to be champions for the right and the capacity of the people to choose their own rulers, yet maintain that they will prefer those only who will immediately and infallibly betray the trust committed to them?

Perhaps one may be forgiven for quoting at length from these authors who, the conservatives allege, were so distrustful of the masses. How timely are their words:

> As there is a degree of depravity in mankind which requires a certain degree of circumspection and distrust, so there are other qualities in human nature which justify a certain portion of esteem and confidence . . . Were the pictures which have been drawn by the political jealousy of some of us faithful likenesses of the human character, the inference would be, that there is not sufficient virtue among men for self-government; and that nothing less than the chains of despotism can restrain them from destroying and devouring one another.

III

Today, anyone who suggests that there are qualities in human nature which justify esteem and confidence is likely to be dismissed as a utopian. But any moralist is a utopian, whether he admits it or not. If he refuses to admit it, he is performing two functions: on the one hand, he is assenting to cultural forms that in fact do keep the masses of men in a vulgar, barbaric state. On the other hand, he is helping perpetuate this condition—an eternity of barbarism that is necessary to maintain the institutions so dear to him.

The insistence on the "imperfectability" of man, dinned into our ears lately, contains a staggering irony if one considers that it is educators, professors, journalists and other professional moralists who are writing in

When Great Minds Get Together

DULLES AND FRANCO AFFIRM U.S.-SPAIN COLLABORATION . . . The talks between Mr. Dulles and General Franco, authoritative quarters reported, were "simply a very frank conversation between two very smart guys."
—New York *Times*, Nov. 1, 1955.

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this vein and consequently declaring that their function in society is entirely useless. There is no reason for their existence if it is true that men, or even the masses, are unchangeable. He who denies human "perfectability" is an immoral moralist because he prevents it from becoming real.

At present, of course, the revival of counter-Enlightenment images has many special causes and functions. In a highly industrialized society, where solidarity is largely created by impersonal and mechanical bonds, the myth of the good Public or its involution, the bad Masses, is an abstraction that creates a false social unity. As a nineteenth-century philosopher prophetically observed, "Only when the sense of association in society is no longer strong enough to give life to concrete realities is the Press able to create that abstraction, 'the public,' consisting of unreal individuals who never are and never can be united in an actual situation or organization—and yet are held together as a whole."

Nor can one ignore the narcotic function performed by the image of the masses-as-barbarians. In a society that tragically dehumanizes personality, sensitive observers must respond in some fashion to the evidence of cultural depression around them. In the Progressive era, some responded with naive and sentimental programs of social uplift. Now many of them (in the grip of the anti-image) sedate their feelings of concern and guilt with the observation that such is the nature of things—that the masses are inherently depraved.

Actually, disorder is not an inherent attribute of the mass but a condition within it. The condition is not immutable, but only the effect of several causes, and, therefore, it may be mitigated by the removal of those causes. The "masses" are not savages or beasts to be restrained by institutional devices, but human persons whose nature is social, who are capable of evil as well as good, who may be harried, intimidated and provoked into abnormality and delinquency, but who will find happiness only in the good. In a climate of distrust and fear, any individual and any group is a potential menace, but when these conditions are removed, people will respond with changes of "nature" that are incredible and profound.

In an unfortunate though understandable reaction, many persons once gripped by the myth of populist goodness are now looking for salvation in élitist political thought. But no one gains by substituting the pathology of élites for the pathology of the mass. He who revolts from the masses to the fantasy of an aristocratic refuge is exactly in the position of the man in the fable who sold his breeches to buy a wig.

Mehta Reprints Available

A limited number of reprints of the two articles by Asoka Mehta on Asia (DISSENT, Spring and Summer issues, 1955) are now available at 25 cents a copy. Mehta's articles, which form part of a pamphlet published in India, were received with great interest, and we have had many requests for copies. 20 cents in bundles of 5 or more.

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A Reply to Erich Fromm

Herbert Marcuse

In trying to refute the argument of my article "The Social Implications of Freudian 'Revisionism'" (DISSENT, Summer 1955), Erich Fromm has constructed a thesis which I did not state.* Although his misinterpretation may be to a great extent due to the fact that my book, *Eros and Civilization,* to which the article specifically referred, had not yet been published, I feel that a few corrections are in order.

1. Fromm attributes to Freud, or to my restatement of Freudian theory, the following notions:

   a) that happiness is satisfaction of the sexual instinct, "specifically of the wish for free access to all available females";
   b) that love is in its "essence" or is "identical with" sexual desire; and
   c) that man has an "inherent wish for unlimited sexual satisfaction," and that the "emancipation of man lies in the complete and unrestricted satisfaction of his sexual desire."

Far from identifying happiness with the "unrestricted satisfaction" of the sexual instinct, Freud held that "unrestricted sexual liberty from the beginning" results in lack of full satisfaction, and that the "value" of erotic needs "instantly sinks as satisfaction becomes readily obtainable." He considered the "strange possibility" that "something in the *nature* of the sexual instinct is unfavorable to the achievement of absolute satisfaction" (*Collected Papers,* Vol. IV, p. 213f; italics added).

Freud did not define the "essence" of love as sexual desire, but as the inhibition and sublimation of sexual desire by tenderness and affection, and he saw in this "fusion" one of the greatest achievements of civilization. Consequently, Freud could not have had the "idea" (and I did not) that "'the emancipation of man lies in the complete and unrestricted satisfaction of his sexual desire" (although I do not agree with Fromm that this idea is part of the "cement which binds men together in the present phase of capitalism").

2. Freud did recognize, however, that even the highest values of civilization, in so far as they contain inhibited and aim-diverted sexuality, inevitably pre-suppose and perpetuate un-freedom and suppression. Fromm concludes that Freud leaves no hope for "any fundamental improvement of society" and that Freud's theory is not a "'radical criticism of alienated society" because it regards "alienation" as necessary prerequisite of all civilization. Moreover,

* "The Human Implications of Instinctivistic 'Radicalism'" by Erich Fromm, DISSENT, Fall 1955, pp. 342-349.

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Fromm emphasizes that Freud did not offer a critique of the "socio-economic structure" of contemporary society. On this point, I agree, and I have not said it did. On the first page of my article, I stressed the degree to which psychoanalysis "was still committed to the society whose secrets it revealed." When I talked of the radical critical implications of Freudian theory, I referred to those of its aspects which elucidate the depth of the repressive controls over the "nature" of man—controls which contemporary society shares with the preceding historical forms of repressive civilization.

This might not be sufficient, but it seems to me far more critical than indicting some secondary features and "excesses" of "alienation" while preserving and even strengthening its roots. Fromm, who accuses Freud of not criticizing capitalism, writes:

> The worker's alienation from his work "can be overcome only if he is not employed by capital, if he is not the object of command, but if he becomes a responsible *subject who employs capital.* The principal point here is not *ownership of the means of production,* but *participation in management and decision making*" (*The Sane Society,* p. 323, Fromm's italics).

He thinks that the principle of co-management means a "serious restriction" of property rights. The owner or owners are entitled to a reasonable rate of interest on their capital investment, but not to the "unrestricted command over men whom this capital can hire" (*ibid.,* p. 324). Has the entrepreneur, who employs free wage labor, ever *had* such "unrestricted command"?

Fromm sees in "workers' participation" a means for "humanizing" work, for establishing a "meaningful" relation between the worker and his labor and his fellowmen, and he quotes the case of "one of the seven largest watch factories" in France, where a sort of work community has been realized. The workers themselves elaborated a "decalogue," which, in addition to some of the Ten Commandments, includes "thou shalt earn thy bread by the sweat of thy brow." If such are the elements that "contradict" alienation, then my argument against Fromm indeed collapses at a decisive point.

3. Fromm expresses "amazement" that I should commit the error of calling a theory (Freud's theory of instincts) radical which is "entirely of the same spirit as that of nineteenth-century bourgeois materialism." What have Eros (for which Freud refers—and not incidentally—to Plato) and the Death Instinct, what have the Nirvana Principle and the "common conservative nature of the instincts" to do with nineteenth-century bourgeois materialism? It is this ultimate depth dimension of Freudian theory on which my main argument was based, and it is this depth dimension which Fromm (with Horney and Sullivan) discards. This mutilation, together with the reduction of the libido theory, necessitated the regression of revisionist psychoanalysis toward pre-Freudian consciousness psychology. Fromm protests and asks for evidence. Practically every page of every book he wrote since *Escape From Freedom* is evidence. If I should mention specific issues: take his re-interpretation of the Oedipus complex, or his analysis of neuroses in terms of a "moral problem." The revisionist reduction also necessitates the shift in emphasis from the pre-individual psyche to the "mature personality." Again Fromm protests and points to the fact that Sullivan's work is almost entirely concerned with the "development of childhood," and that in his own psychol-

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ogy "the character of a person is mainly determined by his childhood situation." But child development belongs to the domain of every consciousness psychology, of every human relations expert, and Sullivan's treatment of it is, in my view, not essentially different from its most ancient presentations at the surface level of "inter-personal relations." Fromm's own analysis of the early stages of character development has been increasingly purged of the explosive instinctual forces linked to the "archaic heritage" of man and to the deadly struggle against suppression. To reveal the implications of this struggle (and thereby the real conditions for the "emancipation of man") was the great concern of Freud's depth psychology. It is not preserved by paying attention to the "conflict between unconscious and conscious strivings" —it depends on the content and dynamic of the unconscious.

4. Fromm accuses me of neglect of the "human factor" and of "callousness towards moral qualities." He states as my "thesis" that "anybody who studies the conditions for happiness and love is betraying radical thought." My thesis is, on the contrary, that Fromm (and the other revisionists) do *not* really study the conditions for "happiness and love." I say explicitly in my article (p. 233) that not these values are spurious "but the context is in which they are defined and proclaimed." They are defined by Fromm in terms of positive thinking which leaves the negative where it is—predominant over the human existence. Fromm maintains that his concept of "productive love" rejects adjustment to an "alienated society." This is precisely what I question; I think that his concepts partake of alienation. The practical suggestions for the "road to sanity" which he makes in his new book (one of them was quoted above) are, in my view, a perfect example of how proposals for a smoother functioning of the established society can be confused with the notions that transcend this society. There is nothing wrong with more and better industrial psychology and scientific management, but there is a great deal wrong with presenting them as non-conformist humanism. Fromm reminds me that "the alienated society develops in itself the elements which contradict it." It does, but I disagree with Fromm on where and what these elements are: much of what he calls alienation is to me the force which overcomes alienation, and what he calls the positive is to me still the negative. "Nihilism," as the indictment of inhuman conditions, may be a truly humanist attitude—part of the Great Refusal to play the game, to compromise with the bad "positive." In this sense, I accept Fromm's designation of my position as "human nihilism."

A Counter-Rebuttal

Erich Fromm

I would not think it necessary to impose upon the patience of the readers of DISSENT by a counter-rebuttal of Herbert Marcuse's reply to me, were it only in order to answer his argument, or his added interpreta-

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tion of *The Sane Society.* As to the former, it does not add much to his original article. As to the latter, I must leave it to any reader of *The Sane Society* to judge whether it stands for "more and better industrial psychology and scientific management."

I do want to answer Marcuse, however, regarding his interpretation of Freud since the works of Freud, especially the article to which Marcuse refers, are not so easily accessible to most readers.

Marcuse says that it is erroneous to attribute to Freud the view:

a) that happiness is satisfaction of the sexual instinct,

b) that love is in its essence sexual desire, and

c) that man has an inherent wish for unlimited sexual satisfaction.

So far Marcuse. Now Freud:

ad a): "Man, having found by experience that sexual (genital) love afforded him his greatest satisfaction, so that it *became in effect a prototype of all happiness to him,* must have been thereby impelled to seek his happiness further along the path of sexual relations, *to make genital erotism the central point of his life.*" (Freud, *Civilization and its Discontents,* Hogarth Press, London, page 69, my italics.) *Cf.* also Freud's statement that primitive man "knew nothing of any restrictions on his instincts," could enjoy his happiness more than civilized man, but due to mutual aggression, not for any length of time. (*Civilization and its Discontents,* pages 91-2.)

ad b): "Love with an inhibited aim was originally full sensual love and *in men's unconscious minds is so still.*" (*Civilization and its Discontents,* page 71, my italics.)

ad c): "Suppose that personal rights to material goods are done away with, there still remain prerogatives in sexual relationships, which must arouse the strongest rancour and most violent enmity among men and women who are otherwise equal." (*Civilization and its Discontents,* page 89.)

All these quotes are taken from that work of Freud's, first published in 1930, which deals most comprehensively and directly with the problem of sex, happiness and society. Marcuse, in his answer, ignores this book completely, and quotes from Freud's paper "The Most Prevalent Form of Degradation in Erotic Love," first published in 1912. It is true that Freud writes in this article that the "importance of an instinctual desire is mentally increased by frustration of it" and "I think the possibility must be considered that something of the nature of the sexual instinct itself is unfavorable to the achievement of absolute gratification." Unfortunately Marcuse fails to mention two things: first, that in the ending paragraph of the same paper, Freud states his thesis of the basic incompatibility between the sexual instinct and the demands of culture, just as I described it in my reply to Marcuse. Freud states that because culture prevents man from obtaining fully satisfying sexual pleasure, he puts his energy to other, that is, to cultural uses. As to Freud's statement that there is something in the nature of the sexual instinct which is unfavorable to the achievement of sexual satisfaction, Marcuse omits to say what Freud meant by this, and yet Freud makes this very clear in the paper of 1912, and especially in *Civilization and its Discontents,* in a footnote on

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page 78. Freud's idea is that the full satisfaction of the sexual instinct is possible only if its sadistic and coprophilic components are satisfied. This is not possible in marital love, because a man who respects his wife necessarily has to frustrate these desires; but, says Freud in *Civilization and its Discontents,* the frustration of these desires is even necessary in the very beginnings of culture "consequent upon man's adoption of the erect posture and the lowering of the sense of smell." In this view, repression of full sexual satisfaction, and hence frustration of happiness, is already necessitated by the most rudimentary beginnings of human civilization. It can be seen that this view of Freud's points in the same direction that I had indicated. Freud's thesis is that primitive man enjoys a greater amount of happiness than civilized man because he is not yet susceptible to as much sexual repression as the latter, but that even in the earliest beginning of human existence, there was already a necessity for a certain amount of sexual repression which prevented man from the attainment of full happiness. Freud's point is *not* to doubt that genital satisfaction is the source of happiness, but that man can never be quite happy because any kind of civilization forces him to frustrate the full satisfaction of his genital desires, especially the sadistic and coprophilic components.

Discussion Group Meets in Chicago

On the initiative of Sidney Lens, who is a Contributing Editor of DISSENT, and one or two others, a Sunday Discussion Group has been organized among pacifists, liberals and independent socialists in Chicago. The group is deliberately limited in size so that discussion can be orderly and productive. At the first session this fall one of the members introduced the subject of Communitarian Societies and the other 19 present took it on from there. The next meeting was devoted to "The Worker and His Work Relationship," and the following one to the question of non-violence.

Meetings are held on alternate Sunday evenings, with the discussion leader limited to 30 minutes and the others to five minutes each. Chicago readers interested in attending these discussions should write to Sidney Lens, c/o DISSENT.

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BOOKS

The Insane Society

THE SANE SOCIETY, by Erich Fromm. Rinehart, New York. 370 pp. $5.00.

About 50,000 Americans are dope addicts; a quarter of a million children between 7 and 17 are arraigned in juvenile courts each year, and 1,750,000 serious crimes are committed by adults; 18 per cent of the draftees rejected by the armed forces have to be rejected for psycho-neurotic disorders; two million problem drinkers lose one out of twelve working months, and one hundred thousand of them have to be hospitalized for as much as six months. Of the whole population, one out of 18 persons will spend some time in a mental institution; 15 out of 100,000 adults will end their own lives and 8 will kill others. These and other signs of serious maladjustment, such as the divorce rate, the peace-of-soul-books and the increasing demand for family counseling, again raise Rousseau's question whether the incidence of insanity and neurosis is related to the development of our civilization.

Or is all this merely a statistical illusion? No one, indeed, can be surprised that in our highly industrialized and urbanized societies fewer disorders should escape the ever-watchful eyes of the fact-gatherers; more cases are correctly diagnosed and properly reported; more also are admitted to institutions under increasingly humane laws and insurance plans. Moreover, the ranks of the biologically unfit, mentally inadequate and socially undesirable are constantly increasing as sanitary improvements, social conscience and the progress of medicine save and prolong the lives which cruder societies allowed to wither and perish. Finally, our asylum statistics are swollen by the village drunk, the family fool, the half-moronic laborer, the shrivelling spinster, the senile totterer whom paternalistic clans and agrarian communities will tolerate in their midst.

Does all this suffice to account for the frightening numbers of our social misfits? To say that their enormous proportion in the later stages of industrial civilization is just an optical mirage, means admitting that our notion of a social misfit now includes a number of types which formerly could be fitted into society. There need be no biological defects of its members, and yet the conditions of survival may have been specialized in such cruel ways as to exclude certain types from a socially meaningful life; others find adjustment possible only by severely curbing their natural inclinations, or even crack up under the strain of conflicting motivations—to live in peace with society on the one hand, and to realize their innate powers on the other. Freud has taught us to look upon these frustrations as the price of civilization; however, the re-

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wards, in terms of sublimations and cultural achievements, have become ever more questionable while the price, in terms of insanity and social unfitness, has grown out of all proportions. Apart from allowing greater numbers of misfits to emerge on the statistical surface, our society seems to produce special forms of anxiety, insecurity, mental aberrations not known heretofore. Are the conditions of survival themselves responsible for the many deviations from the development of healthy, normally creative personalities? Except in the termite state, where the individual exists for the sake of society, failure to provide opportunity of happiness and self-realization for great numbers indicates a disease not of the people but of their pattern of life, their values and the social arrangements which anthropologists call culture, sociologists civilization and political economists society. Is our society, then, itself insane?

IN HIS RECENT BOOK, *The Sane Society*, our friend Erich Fromm, himself a psychologist, turns the tables on his colleagues and reverses their procedure. Instead of asking, as they do, how the individual can be adjusted to society, he says in effect: Why not adjust society to the requirements of a full development of the personality? Fromm is eminently equipped to analyze the terms in which such a question can be meaningfully discussed. All his previous research was concerned with the area where psychology and sociology overlap: his Studies on Family and Tradition (available in German only) did pioneer work on the "transmission belt" between society and individual; *Escape From Freedom* is a classic of political psychology; *Man For Himself* related ethics to characterology; *Psychoanalysis and Religion* pursued the probing Freud, Jung and others began into the oldest field of social sublimation. His new book does for psychology what Ruth Benedict's *Patterns of Culture* had done for anthropology; it uses psychological terms and psychoanalytical insight to explore the meaning of society.

In so doing, Fromm had to cover much of the ground which, through their various approaches, had previously been explored by Marx, Max Weber, Durkheim, Schumpeter, Tawney, Fromm himself and most recently Riesman. Scholars brought up in any of these traditions will find it easy to retranslate Fromm's terms back into their particular languages. They would be ill advised, though, to conclude that the book is wanting in originality. Its freshness does not reside in the shrewd observations which the lay reader cannot find elsewhere, nor in any sensation-loaded clinical indiscretions—of which there is a studied dearth throughout the book—but precisely in the brilliant mirroring of one science in the other, in the revelation that findings of psychology become meaningful in sociology, and facts known to sociologists beget significance in psychology.

Fromm's mastery in the art of interweaving, juxtaposing and integrating several sciences, to build up functional descriptions of our collective disease, will be appreciated by comparison with similar attempts where the various ingredients remain visibly separated chapter-wise. Fromm achieves this integration through a tightly knit and very subtle frame of definitions and conceptions which cannot be outlined in a brief review but must be studied in detail. They are, as in Fromm's earlier contributions, analytic and normative at the same time—this feature makes Fromm one of the last true humanists. As with Plato and the long sequence of thinkers up to Marx and most 19th-century writers, that which Fromm calls good is always related to that which he calls true, or beautiful for that matter. He does not believe in cultural relativism but dis-

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tinguishes healthy from unhealthy societies, and he is not ashamed to equate his "concept of mental health with the norms postulated by the great spiritual teachers of mankind." To maintain this humanistic attitude in the 20th century, indeed he has to reject both 19th-century materialism and 20th-century scientism.

FROM THESE PREMISES follows Fromm's position *vis-a-vis* capitalism and socialism. He is not so much concerned with the mechanics of the business cycle or the deprivations of poverty, as he is with human dignity and personal creativity in an industrial society. He is ready to admit that some form of planned capitalism can avoid depressions and that, at least in the most advanced countries, workers are materially well off. Yet, refrigerators, TV and family cars, even with company-paid pension plans, have produced no feeling of security; nor has corporate research into "human relations" or the glad-handers' companionability reduced the hostile-instrumental feelings between man and man. Specialization has crippled man's creative powers; competition has bred a characterological type that may be fittest for survival temporarily but certainly is not the most desirable socially and falls short of man's best chance fully to develop his capacities for production and enjoyment. Exploitation is analyzed not so much in terms of surplus value but, following Hegel and the young Marx, as the instrumental attitude of one man to another. Quite apart from all income differentials and independent of class antagonism, this basic perversion of human relationships into abstract, instrumental value relations is "capitalism." It obviously is a mental as much as a material condition; it is responsible for, and consists in, the appearance of the fractional man, denounced by many thinkers ever since the time of the Renaissance—a man who is dealing with others not as a full person but through that part of his personality which is their least common denominator; human activity itself has been reduced to an abstraction. Humanistic socialism never tires of reminding exploiters and exploited alike—and today we must add: managers and bureaucrats even more so—that they are subject to the abstract laws of value production and technological rationality which deny them the chance to feel and act with human sympathy towards their neighbours, friends and even their own selves. (Fromm uses the ambiguous word "love," but might have benefited from Scheler's development of the sympathy concept).

Going one step further, Fromm shows how even our ways of enjoyment and relaxation have become alienated. A man may feel that evenings "at home" and away from the drudgery of work he can devote himself to his likes, desires, hobby, family and self-improvement; he is mistaken. Capitalism has split him into two half-persons, one who works and one who plays; but if the creative abilities of the first have been perverted by the attitudes of marketing, so have the enjoyment abilities of the second. In the "mass culture" of managed industrialism, enjoyment has been perverted into "consumption," and human experience of fellow-men and of the good things in Nature has been replaced by the purely receptive attitudes of a consumer mentality; to top it, these mass enjoyments often are presented to us in a pre-digested form, canned and sterilized. Even where we might have genuine experience, says Fromm, we prefer to remove its immediacy: instead of abandoning ourselves to the beauty of a mountain view, we snap a picture of it; the innocent hobby of photography stands revealed as a dangerous agent of our enslavement. We no longer are "ourselves" even in our free time, because our selves are not free.

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YET, WHILE ALL THIS is as bad as Fromm says it is, his sociological frame of reference seems less clearly defined than his psychological terms. Fromm himself has vigorously refuted Marcuse's contention, in the summer issue of this magazine, that "there is no place for (true) love and happiness whatsoever in a capitalist society"; he implies that there might be degrees of alienation and takes the "dialectical position, that an alienated society develops the elements which contradict it." In this light, that photographic camera looks somewhat less infernal. The neighbor who bores us with the slides from his European trip may simply wish to re-live his experience and enhance it by sharing it. Is the enjoyment of another man's experience, such as a painting by Renoir, less alienated than the reproducing of one's own? The answer may all depend on who looks at what and at what time. In our industrialized society, where the production sphere is the center of alienation, the craving for "escape" and relief in the consumption sphere expresses an element of rebellion which Fromm tends to overlook. He is mostly concerned with the capture of this hitherto subversive sphere by the conformist spirit of alienation; his indictment of the new consumer attitudes indeed is poignant, his observations of related commercial attitudes brilliant, and shrewd his bracketing of both with fashionable philosophies. Yet in the enthusiasm of discovery Fromm somehow loses sight of production just at the time when the most interesting development happens in this sphere. The rapid increase in productivity—besides taking much of the effort out of work —recently has removed the job of feeding and clothing all humanity from the center of attention, and for the first time in history, men are free to make their lives meaningful for themselves, not only in their working hours but even more so in their hours of play which now tend to outnumber the others.

It is no accident, therefore, that Riesman and Fromm should concentrate their criticism on the horrors of our consumer culture; but with Fromm this results in a strange bias against consumer attitudes as such and in favor of certain producer attitudes. Fromm's remedy against the insanity of a society of professional 24-hour-a-day consumers is to turn them back into producers. It is easy to discern in his ideal a certain nostalgia for the wholeness of life, work and play that allegedly existed in the medieval craftsman's world and still is being sought by the artist, the country doctor and teacher. Fromm himself is a writer, a scientist, a teacher and something of an artist, besides being a rebel —all of which makes him an eminent example of his own ideal. But for most independent producers, as he says himself, the pride of work is tied up with the sense of property—a decidedly alienated form of satisfaction; in an industrial society, the worker's pride may refer to his skills and abilities in controlling a process of production; these technological satisfactions, too, are fractional and ideological, as long as the worker's control of the process affords him no insight into the social purposes which it serves. Socialists, therefore, have always tried to widen the scope of workers' control; but whatever name it was given, collective bargaining, industrial democracy, cooperative enterprise, codetermination and human engineering have not done away with the basic split between production and consumption, work and play. Since not everybody can be an artist, most people work to make a living and consider the need to do so as a "curse."

At this point, a sharper distinction between "alienation" of different kinds, moreover, might have avoided some confusion of capitalism with popular culture.

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his guess that even those who completely disagree will find it thoughtful and thought-provoking, never dogmatic and forever pointing the finger at our ignorance and complacency in matters that should concern us most—which is all we need in the present situation. H. P.

Juvenile Delinquency and Class Conflict

DELINQUENT BOYS, THE CULTURE OF THE GANG, by Albert K. Cohen. The Free Press, Glencoe, Ill., 202 pp. $3.50.

We are now witnessing one of our periodic "crises" in social control. Though official statistics show a sharp increase in the crime rate, particularly among adolescents, we will never know the extent to which this crisis is being fabricated. Since police policy is invariably to "crack down" during a "crisis," official statistics may reflect the public anxiety as well as produce it. Nevertheless, gangs of teen-age marauders roam the streets, occasionally seeking victims for brutal tortures or "rumbles" with rival gangs, and they present a serious social problem.

Everybody wants to "do something" about delinquency today. Policies on this issue are as varied as the ideologies and vested interests of a highly differentiated society. Reducing dropouts from school, recreational programs, slum clearance, parent education, higher teachers' salaries, remedial reading, more police, tougher and weaker judges, juries, and laws, larger prisons, love, religion, psychiatry, deep analysis, and scientific research are among the nostrums on the market.

Each cure is, of course, based upon some assumed cause of delinquency, but it is doubtful that each policy monger's choice of a cause precedes his choice of a remedy. Every specialist demands more funds to "meet the emergency" in his own way. This free-for-all is encouraged by the disorganized eclecticism of current criminology. If the experts announce that everything conceivable contributes to crime, everyone with an axe is free to grind it on the public stone.

For this reason it is especially encouraging to find a new study of juvenile delinquency, Albert Cohen's *Delinquent Boys,* which is a rare contribution not only to criminology, but to social science as well. It reflects a detailed study of published research and the author's personal experience working in a boys' correctional institution.

COHEN DEPARTS FROM where the late Edwin H. Sutherland and his students have left the study of crime. Much of their work has been devoted to the refutation of common hypotheses linking various personal qualities with criminality. When the proposed biological, intellectual, personality, and economic causes of crime are all eliminated by the Sutherland school, we are left with the theory of "differential association" which states that the criminal learns criminality from others who are already criminal. He differs from his law-abiding neighbor only in having had more frequent and intensive contacts with the criminal culture. "The little ones do it because the big ones do it."

To many, such an explanation is

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unsatisfying. We want to know where the criminal culture comes from. As Cohen puts it, "Why is it *there* to be learned?" His book is an attempt to answer this question in the special case of the juvenile delinquent subculture.

This subculture has many characteristics besides its criminality. Cohen describes it as "non-utilitarian, malicious, and negativistic." Vandalism and truancy, the most common offenses, can only be "utilitarian" in the obscure, peculiar sense in which all behavior intended to satisfy some personal needs is utilitarian. When examined closely, even juvenile stealing often appears profitless. Stolen objects are frequently discarded, destroyed, or casually given away. The "malice" of the delinquent subculture consists of the group's apparent "enjoyment in the discomfiture of others." The subcultural delinquent not only *avoids* the pressures of legal and moral norms; he takes positive pleasure in *flouting* the rules. In describing the subculture as "negativistic," Cohen suggests that it is organized about the principle of its "negative polarity" to the dominant middle-class culture. The "good" of the subculture is derived from the "bad" of the dominant culture, while the subcultural vices are precisely the virtues of the surrounding society.

THREE LESS IMPORTANT FEATURES of the delinquent subculture are also of interest—its versatility, insistence upon group autonomy, and "short-run hedonism." In contrast with professional adult crime, and with the delinquency of female adolescents, the gang's activities are highly varied. Rarely are activities planned or long range consequences considered; the immediate satisfactions of the proposed act seem to be crucial. The autonomy insisted upon is the right of the group to arrange its affairs without outside interference. This, of course, is quite consistent with suppression of the gang member's freedom in behalf of the norms and interests of the group.

The delinquent subculture is not evenly distributed among the various sectors of our society. Cohen feels that the available evidence indicates that delinquent offenses and the delinquent subculture are concentrated among male adolescents in the working class portion of the population—despite the unrepresentative samples on which this conclusion is usually based. It would, perhaps, have been more discreet to admit our ignorance of the class distribution of offenses. For Cohen's purposes, however, it is only necessary that the delinquent *subculture* be concentrated in the working class since, as he recognizes, not all delinquency is related to the subculture. In this connection, it is of interest that studies show that male lower class delinquents belong to gangs and their crimes are gang activities more often than are those of female or middle class offenders.*

Here, then, is Cohen's problem: to explain the existence of a subculture carried by gangs of delinquent boys, featuring non-utilitarian criminal activities, malice, negativism, versatility, short-run hedonism, and group autonomy, and concentrated in the male, working class sector of society. He looks upon this subculture as a group-contrived and jointly-elaborated solution to problems of status-frustration

* While this theory could easily be extended to account for the concentration of the delinquent subculture among adolescents and in the second generation of some immigrant groups, Cohen did not attempt to do so.

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faced in common by working class boys in a predominantly middle-class society. Outside of his immediate family and residential neighborhood, the working class child is evaluated on the basis of middle class standards. These include his "ascribed status," based mainly upon his father's occupation, and upon various criteria of "achievement." The working class child is handicapped in the fight for recognition by the differences between working class and middle class techniques of child rearing and the differences between their informal social norms. The middle class standards determining success in school and in the economy include ambition, self-reliance, the attainment of skills of economic value, the sacrifice of immediate pleasures for future gain, rational planning, etiquette, personability, control of physical violence, the constructive use of leisure, and respect for property rights. In contrast, working class norms set limits upon ambition, place more value on spending than on saving, value immediate satisfactions, feature an ethic of reciprocity rather than one of self-reliance, allow for the open expression of aggression, condemn rather than sanction the manipulative personality, and regard the sharing of property as a duty rather than a mere virtue.

IN THE SCHOOL, the settlement house, the economy and in his relations with those relatives, friends and neighbors who live by the cultural values of the middle class, the working class child is evaluated by standards that are not his and for which he has not been prepared. His birth, social condition and upbringing do not allow him to achieve adequate recognition in terms of these standards. To be sure, the working class child need not necessarily adapt himself to these criteria, since they are of importance to him only to the degree that his self-esteem is involved, and this, in turn, becomes a problem only when he cares about the opinions that people with middle class values hold of him. But if he does care, he faces a serious problem to which various solutions are available: he can try to break into the middle class world by hustling either in business or college, which means straining his ties with family and friends; he can try to effect a compromise between working class norms and middle class demands; he can succumb to what psychologists call a "reaction-formation" by participating in the subculture of juvenile delinquency.

The latter has the special attraction of its "negative polarity" to the middle class norms, for this guarantees the bad boy in school a place in the sun. Since the good of the subculture is the bad of the middle class, and *vice versa,* the status hierarchy of the middle class dominated school or settlement house is completely reversed. The low man in the prestige system of the school is top dog in the delinquent gang; the "good boy" is frequently beaten up. This reversal of the middle class status-hierarchy is the crucial explanation of the content and distribution of the delinquent subculture.

THE WEAKEST PORTION of Mr. Cohen's book is its discussion of policies for delinquency control. In time-honored conservative fashion, he warns of the indescribable complexity of society and the danger of reaching facile conclusions regarding what ought to be done. Such a view might be admir-

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able were it not for the fact that this time, as whenever the argument is advanced, the recommendation amounts to leaving things as they are. We are urged, in effect, to tolerate muggings, rapes, gang wars, the wanton destruction of persons and property rather than fiddle with the sensitive mechanism of the social system.

The idea that delinquency is deeply related to the functioning of our society is not new. Cohen's detailed description of this relationship is new. And regardless of the respectability of its origin, Cohen's theory is radical in its implications since it points up the fact that structural change is required for a constructive solution to the delinquency problem.

The educational system is the major institution in which the working class child first faces the problem of status-frustration. Recreational activities commonly consist of competitive sport or individual hobbies, which presume that the individual is motivated toward disciplined Calvinistic striving and leave no room for an ethic of reciprocity and activities bringing immediate satisfactions. The distance between the group life of the delinquent subculture and the middle class orientation of most professionalized social workers is so great that one cannot feel very optimistic about superficial guidance efforts. Even intensive guidance and psychotherapy appear irrelevant since, far from being mentally ill, the delinquent appears to Cohen as having adjusted to an otherwise intolerable situation precisely through his participation in a delinquent group.

If even a significant portion of the delinquency problem takes the subcultural form that Cohen describes, it would appear that different measures are necessary. And particularly futile is any program which leaves intact the pattern of invidious distinctions supposed to be necessary for the efficient functioning of a competitive economy. GILBERT SHAPIRO

Food for Thought

ON SOCIALIST MOVEMENT TREASURIES. KARL MARX. Edited by John Loeb. Voluntary Press. 3 pp. 10c.

This curious little pamphlet consists of an excerpt, never before reprinted in this country, from an article Marx wrote in the British *Secular Chronicle* for August 1878. It is a reply to a critic who had attacked the International Working Men's Association, among other reasons, on the ground of poverty. Marx proceeded to note that despite its lack of funds, the movement had "won world-wide fame and a place in history, not by length of purse, but by strength of mind and unselfish energy . . . "

This snippet is now reprinted by Mr. Loeb as encouragement to socialists bedeviled by lean treasuries. He writes that "every socialist must give until it hurts." Since Mr. Loeb cites no specific organization, we assume he is ready to include DISSENT in this beneficence, and we therefore recommend his sentiments to our readers as among the worthier thoughts of the time.

NEW BOOKS RECEIVED

THE DEVELOPMENT OF ACADEMIC FREEDOM IN THE UNITED STATES, by Richard Hofstadter and Walter P. Metzger. Columbia University Press, New York; 1955. $5.50. —This volume traces the evolution of the problem of academic freedom in the American educational system up to the present day.

ACADEMIC FREEDOM IN OUR TIME, by Robert M. MacIver. Columbia University Press, New York, 1955. $4.00.—This companion volume to the above-listed book is a study prepared for the American Academic Freedom Project at Columbia University.

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LETTERS

"Couch Liberalism"

Editors:

To list all my disagreements with Harold Rosenberg's raid on what he chooses to call "Couch Liberalism" would require more space than you can allot me and more time than I can spare at the moment.

Suffice it to cite a fairly typical passage from Mr. Rosenberg's diatribe:

"The final result was that a neo-liberal became available to admit the justice of any accusation, no matter how ridiculous. Since Oppenheimer gave money to aid the Spanish Loyalists, it mattered not that at the height of Russian-American cooperation he unequivocally rejected the approaches of Communist agents; we, including Oppenheimer, may well own up that we are unreliable types and deserve to be fired, regardless of actual service to the country."

Now, I am not quite sure whose position is being thus described. But, since elsewhere Mr. Rosenberg refers acidly to "Diana Trilling's Couch Liberal resume of the Oppenheimer Case," I assume that he has in mind statements such as Mrs. Trilling's. If so, may I remind him that Diana Trilling concluded her judicious analysis of the proceedings by urging that, in spite of his past political errors—which, incidentally, as Mr. Rosenberg knows full well, were not simply a matter of giving "money to aid Spanish Loyalists"—Oppenheimer did *not* "deserve to be fired"? Or does Mr. Rosenberg refuse to acknowledge such a conclusion, when it is not couched in the self-righteous rhetorics of conditioned-reflex liberals or eternally petulant radicals?

VICTOR ERLICH
Seattle, Washington

HAROLD ROSENBERG *replies*:

Mr. Erlich claims to be in doubt about whose position I was describing. Does he deny there *was* such a position? Did *no* "liberals" turn up "to admit the justice of any accusation?" Obviously, the test is not whether Mrs. Trilling agreed that Oppenheimer should be fired; from the accusations she made in her "judicious analysis," others could draw their own conclusions as to what Oppenheimer "deserved."

Yes, Diana Trilling was opposed to the firing of Oppenheimer; Leslie Fiedler was opposed to the electrocution of the Rosenbergs; and the defendants at the Moscow Trials were opposed to their own liquidation. But the "judicious analysis" of each justified the firers and the executioners. With this assistance all the latter had to do was to refuse to slice the sausage at the thin extremity proposed by their new allies.

My article had nothing to do with radicalism, petulant or other, but with the falsification of history through the fabrication of a collective "we." Of course we know that Stalinism in the thirties did not stop with "giving money to aid Spanish Loyalists." It would not have surprised me in the least to learn that an American fellow-traveling scientist had turned over military secrets to the Russians. *But Oppenheimer refused to do it.* Therefore to condemn him it was necessary to fabricate a Type that would go beyond the Stalinists and their collaborators. What Type? Fiedler gave some clues—for others see Mrs. Trilling's article.

Although this problem of the Couch Liberal falsification has nothing to do with radicalism, it does have to do with politics. And politics is struggle—ask Harry Truman. So I answer Mr. Erlich's last question thus: Yes, the "conditioned reflex" of a liberal is as important to his activity and to his judgment as the reflex of a soldier or of a parliamentary

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debater to his. This reflex advises him that certain sounds mean that he is under attack. It helps prevent him from choosing just this particular moment to "judiciously" hunt up material that will strengthen interests antagonistic to freedom. Certainly, it prevents him from *inventing* material of surrender or defeat. Yes, an orthodox liberal conclusion fails to dispel the effects of writings in which the liberal "reflex" is absent.

Better and Better

Editors:

Thanks for sending me your magazine which is excellent and is getting better and better. The Autumn issue is an admirable balance of lucidities on the present and past situations. I was delighted to find Proudhon reconsidered, as well as Populism, together with Michael Harrington's and Newman's and Irving Howe's cool analyses of closer days. But the whole magazine is good.

WALDO FRANK

Kempton's Book

Editors:

I think it is a shame when a good literary critic falls into a personal vendetta with the author of a book under review. In his review of Murray Kempton's *Part of Our Time* Irving Howe begins with such an animus that he can't make up his mind whether to flay Kempton as a journalist, as a stylist or as an apostate to radical ideals. And when Howe gets nasty, he is very nasty indeed, be the object of his wrath friend or foe.

There is no excuse for a hatchet job like this, and I think that if Howe is half the man I have thought him to be for many years he will find in himself the moral courage that his present victim has made a hallmark—or enough of it, at any rate, to apologize to Murray Kempton.

Kempton's life is not an easy one, after all. It takes him to such sordid precincts as the scene of the Till murder and among uncouth laborers who sully Howe's pristine academic haunts only as literary figments. The job of pegging injustice in print every lay, Tuesday through Friday, in the New York *Post*; and monthly in the *Progressive*; and continuously in the ACLU doubtless leaves little time for those literary niceties so dear to Howe's heart.

Howe's real beef, when you come right down to it, is that Kempton didn't write *Part of Our Time* as he would have written it. Had Howe been the author, its subtitle would have been, perhaps, "A Deep and Analytical Study of the Glorious Left in the Thirties." Kempton, however, only tried to present "Some Ruins and Monuments . . ." Give him credit at least for trying. Many reviewers did and not merely the (ugh) "latter-day liberals" singled out by Howe. One of the more former-day types was named A. J. Muste who, incidentally, together with Murray Kempton, Irving Howe, et al, founded DISSENT. A. J.'s review is in the September issue of *Fellowship* Magazine. Howe might do worse than to read it and reflect that the quality of mercy, while perhaps not as heady as his own sulfurous vapors, is closer to justice in this case. Or, maybe, just to be at odds with Schlesinger, Niebuhr and Bell, Murray Kempton's hide is a necessary sacrifice.

WILLIAM ROBERT MILLER

IRVING HOWE *replies*:

The "vendetta" that has aroused Mr. Miller's anger consisted simply of saying that Kempton's book seemed to me bad and historically irresponsible; and while no human being can entirely vouch for his own motives, my review, so far as I can judge, said nothing whatever about Kempton's person or character. Nor does Mr. Miller's remark that I would like to see the '30s described as "glorious" persuade me that he quite made out what I was saying.

The truth is that he doesn't even try to suggest in what ways I was unfair to the book. Kempton, he writes, frequently attacks injustices, doesn't have an easy life, etc. Granted; but what has all this to do with the quality of his book?

The real implication of Mr. Miller's letter, I fear, is that I should have written a less unfavorable review because Kempton is on "our side." But I think that if a book is vulgar and flimsy, it

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remains so even if written by one of the original "founders" of DISSENT; it would remain so even if written by one of the editors of DISSENT; and the first step toward establishing any standards in the intellectual life of American socialists is to recognize this fact.

Socialist Sects

Editors:

Lewis Coser's reply to Gordon Haskell's article on the need to maintain socialist organizations in the U. S. calls for some comment.

Coser apparently shares with Haskell the belief that independent political action by the American labor movement (such as through a Labor Party) would be desirable. He also shares the hope that in the course of its development an independent Labor Party will identify itself with socialist positions, enabling it to solve the main problems of our society in a progressive manner. This assumes a junction at some future date of socialist thought with the politically awakening mass of organized labor.

Now, Haskell has definite ideas on how this junction can be prepared and accomplished. One may agree or disagree with these ideas, but they must be discussed seriously. This Coser does not do. He doesn't answer Haskell's arguments, he doesn't substantiate his assertions ("trained flight from reality, etc.") and he doesn't put forward any ideas of his own.

Yet, Haskell's argument could be summed up in a few simple questions. Obviously, if socialist ideas are to survive, they can only survive in the form of persons who believe in them. How are these persons to be recruited and trained in the ideas of socialism? Coser believes that it is useless for socialists to advocate policies, in addition to "re-establishing values" and re-stating principles. Does he believe, then, that new socialists can be recruited and trained merely by reading DISSENT? . . . Does Coser believe that writing articles for DISSENT is an adequate substitute for political activity? Or does he believe, perhaps, that DISSENT can by itself provide the basis for such activity? . . .

So far it has derived its analysis of Stalinism from the Independent Socialist League, its general outlook from social-democracy and its mood from every defeated socialist movement in history. As such, it has led a parasitic existence, feeding on the organized socialist movement much in the same way as the *Monthly Review* feeds on the CP.

There is also a revealing question of tone. Throughout his reply Coser exhibits the humorless wit and the narrow vindictiveness ordinarily associated with sectarian polemics in the traditional style. Coser seems to have retained from his radical experience above all a certain style of writing which we may call "Revolutionary Rudeness" or "Socialist Sarcasm."

Coser could be described as a sectarian in retirement. There is nothing wrong with this, provided he does not mistake his conditioned reflexes for political theories and leaves other people to work in peace. DANIEL FABER

LEWIS COSER *replies*:

I certainly do not believe that writing for DISSENT is a substitute for mass or any other kind of political activity; but I tried to suggest in the article to which Mr. Faber objects that participation in the ritual life of the existing radical sects (which also comes mainly to writing for papers with small circulations) isn't a substitute either. The continued use of the *rhetoric of activity* can hardly hide the fact that the radical sects are as much cut off from real political activity as any contributor to DISSENT.

Analytic thinking may not seem a very glamorous and exciting activity, but it is the indispensable prerequisite for political action and is almost the only thing a radical in the United States can do today if he wants to be honest with himself and others. And, besides, why does one detect in Faber a tendency to devaluate the act of "merely" writing—does he perhaps feel that it is unimportant? Or can he point to other significant activities in which he and his sect colleagues are engaged, which the editors of DISSENT neglect?

I do indeed think that the education of a new generation of radicals is one

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of our central tasks; DISSENT tries to do as much as it can. But I will gladly admit that, though I reject Haskell's solution, I have not as yet found "the" answer. (I propose to return to these questions in a future issue of DISSENT.)

As for Mr. Faber's complaint that DISSENT is parasitic in relation to the sects: If the Independent Socialist League had presented one living idea in the last decade I should have been delighted to feed on it, parasitically if you like, but how is one to feed on petrified matter?

Conservative Heroes

Editors:

In his excellent and stimulating study on Edmund Burke in the Summer 1955 issue of DISSENT Bertram Sarason stated that "we need go no further than the founder of modern conservatism, Edmund Burke himself, to show that the historic role of conservatism has been to defend vested interests." If, however, you would go a little bit further in history you may find other interesting examples.

In the calendar of modern sentimental conservatism, Adam Muller (1779-1829) is another saint. Political philosopher of the Romantic School, political advisor to Metternich, friend of many royalties, theoretician of the Restoration and convert to Catholicism, he is looked upon as a pure idealist. Recently the German *Zeitschrift fuer die Gesamte Staatswissenschaft* (1955, I) printed his heretofore unpublished letters to the Duke of Anhalt-Koethen. There is a pearl in his triumphant letter to the Duke announcing that the popular upheaval in Piedmont had been smashed. In this letter of 5 April 1821 he wrote:

" . . . On the 28th news was received in Paris that the whole Kingdom had capitulated and accepted the orders of the rightful King. Who can describe the triumph of the royalists of Paris and the defeat of the liberals. The government bonds rose in four days from 75 to 82.— May God give wisdom to the Kings after he has given them victory.

"I remain, in deepest veneration and submission your majesty's most humble servant

AM."

SEBASTIAN FRANK

STATEMENT REQUIRED BY THE ACT OF AUGUST 24, 1912, AS AMENDED BY THE ACTS OF MARCH 3, 1933, AND JULY 2, 1946 (Title 39, United States Code, Section 233) SHOWING THE OWNERSHIP, MANAGEMENT, AND CIRCULATION OF DISSENT published quarterly at New York, N. Y. for Oct. 1, 1955.

1. The names and addresses of the publisher, editor, managing editor, and business managers are: Publisher, Dissent Publishing Association, 509 Fifth Avenue, New York 17, N. Y.; Edtor, Irving Howe, 509 Fifth Avenue, New York 17, N. Y.; Managing editor, none; Business manager, Stanley Plastrik, 509 Fifth Avenue, New York 17, N. Y.

2. The owner is: Walter Goldwater, 509 Fifth Avenue, New York 17, N. Y.

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Stanley Plastrik,
Business manager

Sworn to and subscribed before me this 10th day of October, 1955. (Signed) JOHN WILSON, Notary Public, State of New York, Qualified in Bronx County. Commission expires March 30, 1956.

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A COLLECTIVE NIGHTMARE

continued from page 2

Finally, a series of charges reflecting on the wisdom and nature of Henry J's associations:

> "You are currently maintaining a close continuing association with your wife, ..., who is stated to be engaged in activities of an organization which is Communist."
> "You stated in 1950 while employed at ..... that your uncle was a Communist."
> "In 1941, [A], allegedly a close friend of yours, was on the mailing list of the National Federation of Constitutional Liberties and the Contemporary Book Shop."

Such was the substance of the accusations. Henry J., while no moral coward, was anxious to retain his government post. Together with his lawyer, he had spent long hours shaping his reply.

> He had affirmed his belief "in the United States Constitution and form of Government, his awareness of the Communist conspiracy and his opposition to 'Communism and radicalism.' He said that no one had ever called him a 'red' or 'pink' to his face."
>
> His replies to specific accusations were unevasive, no matter how personal or intimate the ground trod upon. For instance, the question of his wife and her associations. He had minced no words in declaring that "... when her affiliations became known to me, I informed her that she would either disassociate herself with the Communist Party or I would divorce her."

THE HEARING TOOK PLACE in a small office adjoining the department from which Henry J. had been suspended. The atmosphere was calm, only semi-judicial and might even be described as genial.

The preliminary round of questioning dealt with what manner of man was Henry J., in what did he believe and with whom did he associate. Had he ever got a letter from Russia, had his parents come from Russia, did his wife have any relatives living in a foreign country?

The Board counsel seemed particularly interested in Henry J's opinions about sex. One of many questions on the subject was: "What do you think of female chastity?" Henry J., fortunately, held a high opinion of it. The counsel seemed pleased. He went on to inquire in detail about Henry J's hobbies, outside activities, his parents and their activities, his religion and observance of it, his concept of his right to a government job and, suddenly, asked why his parents were not present at the hearing. (Henry J. was not sure whether their absence was a point in his favor or not.)

Abruptly, the Chairman of the Board turned to the matter of Henry J's reading habits.

> "In your library at home, could you give me an idea of the type of literature or the books that you enjoy accumulating?"

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To prepare his own solution, Fromm has introduced the notion of "productiveness," avoiding hackneyed expressions like "creative," free and spontaneous. His own term is most unfortunate because it can be confused with one of the most outrageously alienated idols of capitalism. Nothing, however, is farther from Fromm's intention than the idea of productiveness for its own sake. If we look into the descriptive part, where Fromm develops his own utopia, his meaning becomes clear: productiveness is an attitude towards life, the universe and mankind which allows the development of a person's full potentialities; it is what Friedrich Schiller and Huibinga called "play," and no sadder indictment of our alienation could be found than this lack of a proper word for our most profound yearning and the central conception of non-alienated self-realization.

The greatest failure of socialism so far has been its inability to envisage socialist people. Clearly, the socialist virtues cannot be selected virtues of other societies; socialism cannot be capitalism minus exploitation or minus private property or minus the capitalistic market. Fromm makes it abundantly clear that the workers have much more to lose than their chains; they also have to lose the cherished frustrations and satisfactions that go with a life in chains, the irrational worries and alienated needs to which they have been accustomed under the insane conditions of survival. He frankly calls Marx a naive optimist in thinking that the good nature of man just had to be liberated from under oppression. Bitter experience has taught us that equality of income, planning, social security, nationalization will not produce anything but—at best—a better and more efficient capitalism. Efficiency, however, is the opposite of what Fromm calls productiveness.

The civilization of the machine age has become equally odious in its liberal-capitalist and its totalitarian-communist form. The various socialist and pseudo-socialist solutions which Fromm discusses also lead him to the conclusion that the problem has not been recognized except in some small communities based on the utopian and quasi-religious notions of brotherly love, sharing of experience and sharing of work. The philosophy of this socialism he calls communitarianism—a word that will hardly fire the imagination of many; nor will the multitude easily be persuaded by the examples he gives of such communities where they seemed to have worked. (It is strange, though, that Fromm should have avoided reference to communitarian settlements in the New World, and at least one reader vainly waited for an apology of the anarchist experiments in the Spanish civil war.) However, the merit of Fromm's approach is his decided return to the utopians; only now, after the failure of so many alienated forms of socialism, can they be studied with benefit to our understanding of what socialism is all about. They were concerned, as Fromm is, with human attitudes, not with better ways of running an economy smoothly and providing more material satisfactions to more citizens. We have to start from the beginning again, with man. This reviewer, who might take exception to some of Fromm's suggestions for a solution, yet knows of no other book that so well expounds the terms in which the solution must be sought, and it is

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Henry J's attorney objected that this question invaded his client's privacy, but he insisted on answering.

Then, without warning, the preliminaries were over. The Board counsel took over.

"Do you by nature get sort of a secret, personal satisfaction out of acting as an individualist?"

Henry J. was too surprised to answer; fortunately, the question became lost in his counsel's objections. The Board counsel continued:

"I'll mention a few words or terms and see if any definition comes to you which can pass on to us. 'Germ warfare.' "
"It's the spreading of disease by distributing germs."
"Have you heard the allegation, have you become aware of the allegations that the United Forces in Korea have used germ warfare?"
"Yes."
"What do you think of those allegations?"
"I thought they're phoney. I thought they're invented."
"What do you consider a 'reactionary' to be?"
"A reactionary is somebody who wants to go backwards—I think it's the original definition. I think it still holds good in practical use."

A rather stern member of the Board, hitherto silent, then took over the questioning.

"Do you or your wife regularly attend any organized church services?"
"No, we don't regularly. We do occasionally.'
"Have you provided any sort of religious training for your children, sir?"
"No, just home training. I used to read the Bible to them now and then. I think they both have attended. When they went to school they both attended church, on and off, in the one we did, which was the Unitarian Church."

This same Board member then passed on to a series of questions about Henry J's brother.

"If you had knowledge of your brother belonging to any of these organizations that are listed in the Attorney General's list, would you come forward and give that information or would you try to shield him?"
"I don't understand what you mean, try to shield him. Try to shield him from what?"
"Suppose you were reinstated and found out later that your brother was involved in any one of these organizations on the Attorney General's list. Would you come forth and tell your supervisor in this agency that your brother was connected in any of these organizations?"

Henry J's counsel finally objected to the question, pointing to its hypothetical character and the difficult moral issue posed.

"You don't know; is that your answer?" asked the Board member. "You don't know what you should do?"
"I don't know what I would do. Some things you don't know until they really happen."

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The line of questioning finally told on Henry J. He ignored a cautionary glance from his lawyer and burst out:

"I don't know. This is the second time I have been interviewed and questioned about my brother... When I see him—even my mother, he doesn't talk to us about what he has done while he was waiting or where he goes or who he was with. We don't ask him. I don't ask him and my mother doesn't. When the FBI, maybe or whoever they were, told me what they thought he was doing, I didn't believe it. It seems funny, I have a family and it is hard for me. I have responsibilities..."

In the silence following this outburst it was impossible to tell its effect. He hoped for the best. The questioning continued. At a nod from the Chairman of the Board, its legal advisor took over.

"Do you think that a reformed Communist would be entitled to complete trust as much as any other person who never had Communist connections?"

But before Henry J. could reply to this, the Board advisor suggested that:

"The appearance of reform, of course, would be one of the most obvious courses of action for a man to take if he were still actively subversive."

Henry J's counsel advised against answering that.

The hearing resumed, with the Board advisor pressing forward. He questioned Henry J. at length about his association with A, stating that A. had been a candidate for a city school board in 1938 and had been backed by the Communist Party.

"Certainly you must agree that everybody who is supported by the Communists is a Communist?"

A statement from an investigating officer in Henry J's department brought out that in 1931 or 1932 he had searched the person of Henry J. on the job one day and then asked his permission to search his home. The officer was looking for a Communist Party membership card. With Henry J., he had then gone to his home and looked in vain for the card. But he had found other things, allegedly given to him by A.

"Did they find some Communist literature in your locker at one time?"
"No."
"In your home?"
"In my home, yes."
"How did that get there?"
"I bought some of it. And the *Daily Worker* you asked me if I bought was given to me as a free subscription for raising money to defend the Scottsboro boys... They looked through all of the books and literature. Incidentally, I think it was brought out that the investigating officer stated he found other literature, very, very much more than Communist literature. I had a few Communist pamphlets back in 1932... I remember specifically, I had two copies of *The Communist*. That is a magazine... I didn't read them."

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"What was your purpose in buying these books?"
"I was interested to know what Communism was. I don't know if you remember back during the depression."

The Chairman interrupted testily. "I remember very well."
The Chairman then asked some questions of his own.

"Mr. J., your file indicates that you were critical at one time of the large property owners of the South."
"I don't recall being critical of the property owners... I was critical of the mill owners for taking cotton from the share croppers at any price."
"You kidded, chided or ridiculed Mrs. Z., a woman school teacher as being of the bourgeoisie because she had purchased a house?"
"I don't think I could ever have said that except in jest."

At this point, Henry J's lawyer felt it advisable to introduce character affidavits from four people in behalf of his client. One such person began his affidavit by referring to his own recent clearance by a governmen Board. All testified that there was no scandal connected with the employee or with his family life, that he did not use drugs or liquor, that he was not a sex deviate, that he could not be the subject of blackmail and that he was not sympathetic to people who desired to subvert the government. All statements were accepted ino the record; the hearing was winding up. But the Board adviser was not finished.

"Do you know E., who works in your office?"
"Yes, I know Mr. E., he's a great kidder. He once said to me, "You are Shadrakh.' "
"What did you answer?"
"So I am Shadrakh."
"Then what?"
"He said, 'You are a Communist.' I replied, 'I am everything, Shadrakh, Communist, Rasputin, Mishakh, Abednego.' "

Henry J's lawyer interposed: "Certainly this kind of raillery constitutes no admission by one who has always invariably been opposed to Communism that he was a communist." But the Board counsel brushed him aside and continued.

"What else was said?"
"I had arguments with some men on the job. I was called Trotsky, Rasputin, Atheist, Russky, Mad Russian, Japanese Spy, Shadrakh, Communist, Mishakh, Abednego, Botts, Amazin, etc. If telling the men that I know five languages: Yiddish, Yaddish and Yoddish, Mickey Mouse and Donald Duckski, means bragging, then I was bragging; but I thought I was joking."

Approximately two months later, Henry J. received a letter advising him that the Board had "found that your continued employment would not be clearly consistent with the interests of national security under Executive Order No. 20450." No reasons were given for this decision.

S. P.

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